



12  
inch

10 JULY 1996

A year ago today, this man drew breath in Srebrenica, relying on the United Nations to keep him safe. Yesterday his bones were dug up. His genocidal killers are still at large. Some of them are still in power. The UN's shame, page 12. Leading article, page 17.

# THE INDEPENDENT

3.036

THURSDAY 11 JULY 1996

WEATHER Mainly dry and bright

40p OR 45p

## Ulster: The breakdown of civil order

By David McKittrick

A pall of foreboding, uncertainty and fear hung over Northern Ireland yesterday as its population wondered whether the next few days could bring compromise and relief, or something close to a breakdown of law and order.

Substantial parts of the country seem to be largely in the grip of men in balaclavas who, through a mixture of menace and force of numbers, are posing a serious challenge to lawful authority.

The security forces have made it clear that, with thousands of loyalist protesters active at spots all over Northern Ireland, they cannot guarantee free passage - even on major roads. The RUC is plainly at something close to full stretch; more British troops are being sent in.

In north Belfast, loyalist elements have, in time-honoured fashion, turned to Belfast's version of ethnic cleansing - attacking and threatening Catholic families and mixed marriages. "Lags out" has been daubed on Catholic doors, and houses petrol-bombed; several dozen have asked to be rehoused on an emergency basis.

BBC Radio Ulster's traffic and travel bulletins, which used to give warning of roadworks and overturned lorries, now convey a new and sinister flavour of what life has become: "In Co Down the A22 Comber to Killyleagh Road has just been blocked. The towns of Markethill, Portadown, Castlederg, Tandragee, Donaghcloney and Caledon are all closed. No roads are closed at the moment in Carrickfergus, but there have been a couple of attempted hijackings there this afternoon. Drivers have been advised to approach the town with extreme care."

The communal unease is increased by the fact that with tomorrow, 12 July, comes the traditional climax of the loyalist marching season, when tens of thousands of Orangemen traditionally take to the streets.

The nightmare scenario is that instead of their usual parades or after them, many will converge on Drumcree in Co Armagh, where the RUC and Orangemen last night completed a fourth day of stand-off.

Those who hope that a negotiated settlement might yet emerge to defuse the tension



CLOCKWORK ORANGE MAN

unionist leaders to accept a compromise to end the confrontation at Portadown. "The confrontation we have seen, the mob violence we have seen, does nobody any good in Ireland. And I think the best way that is going to be resolved is by negotiation at local level in the communities," he said.

In another development, Government officials travelled to Portadown to meet representatives of the Catholic community whose protest led to the re-routing of the Drumcree march.

Cardinal Daly's comments raised the question of the seriousness of this, the latest in Northern Ireland's long line of recurring and apparently unending crises, and where it figures on the Ulster Richter

scale. In terms of deaths, it does not compare with previous events, which claimed large numbers of lives, and nor does it represent some momentous, irreversible political development.

But a Catholic man has been shot dead, and the men manning the scores of roadblocks have created an intensely ominous atmosphere. The Government clearly regards the situation as one of the utmost gravity. 12 July is looming, and the sense is widespread that the dark, almost elemental forces which periodically spring to the surface of Northern Ireland are being unleashed.

No easy compromise to the Drumcree dilemma is obvious, and with unionist leaders such as David Trimble pitted against the Government, that section of the loyalist *lumpenproletariat* which loves conflict feels free to take to the streets.

The communal apprehension is all the greater since, until the IRA broke its ceasefire in February, the sense was general that the Troubles had reached their final phase. No one thought it would be easy, but Protestants and Catholics alike were saying publicly that the endgame of the conflict had been reached, and that the outcome might be some kind of honourable draw.

To many it looks as though the Drumcree impasse, at this fearful moment, may be that most terrible of things - a game in which no draw is possible, a problem without a solution - the point where an irresistible force meets an immovable object.

During the Troubles, republicans have inflicted enormous damage but, with the possible exception of the 1981 hunger strikes, have never really made Northern Ireland ungovernable. The two occasions on which it has come closest to that point were both the work of loyalists - the Protestant general strike of 1974 and the anti-Anglo-Irish agreement of 1985.

The current crisis has yet to reach such destabilising levels, but the terrible feeling is that it could yet do so, and that elements which no one can control could break loose.

It is that fear which has produced such widespread feelings of distress, anxiety, and sheer dread.

Political cartoon by Michael Moore

&lt;p

## news

## JP's told not to imprison for fines default

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES  
Legal Affairs Editor

Fine defaulters should be deprived of their driving licences or have their names published in the newspapers, a minister suggested yesterday as the Government launched its latest initiative to stop the clogging up of jails with petty offenders.

Publishing new guidelines to magistrates aimed at ensuring prison was the last resort after all other methods had been exhausted, Gary Streeter, junior minister in the Lord Chancellor's Department, said: "We rightly insist that people pay their fines which are more than just money due. They are a debt to society. We also recognise that we do want to keep our prisons for hardened criminals and persistent offenders - people who break into our homes or beat up our families."

A Lord Chancellor's Department/Home Office working group, set up last May, is already considering whether curfews monitored by electronic tags could be used as an alternative punishment to jailing defaulters.

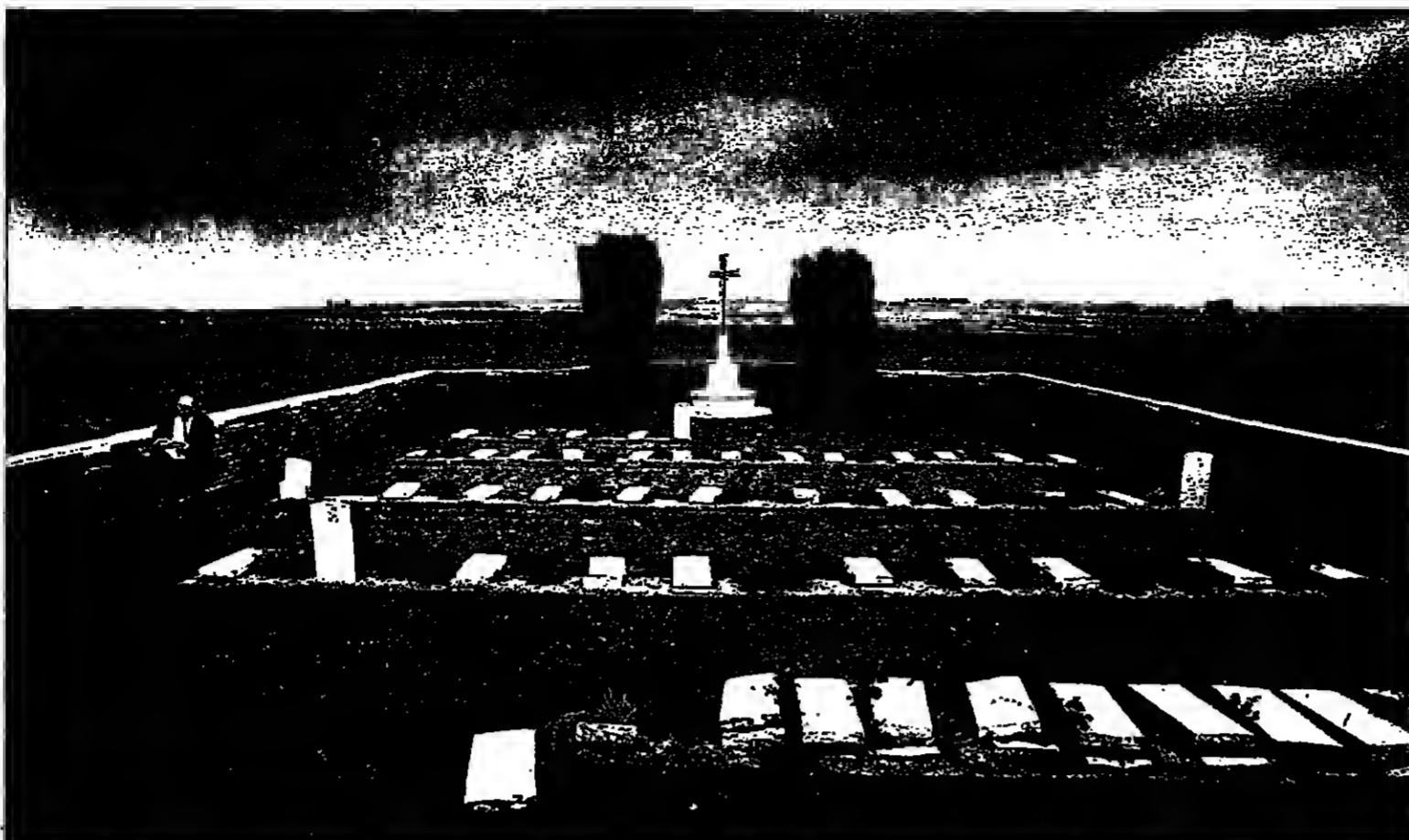
It will now study a range of other possible punishments, including the removal of offenders' driving licences, publishing names of defaulters in the local press and the Scottish system of supervised attendance orders. Mr Streeter told a news conference: "It's a question of taking away from people things they value by way of punishment." Legislation on any alternatives is not in prospect before the election, however.

Yesterday's "good practice" guidance on the enforcement of financial penalties comes against a background of mounting criticism of the increasing numbers of people, including women with families, jailed for non-payment of television licences or other minor offences.

Research figures published by the Home Office yesterday show that 22,469 men and 1,454 women were imprisoned for default in 1994, the highest figure for more than 10 years. But figures indicate a fall during 1995.

Magistrates believe they have been unfairly criticised because people who fail to turn up in court are tried in their absence with no information about their means. Rosemary Thompson, chairman of the Magistrates' Association and a member of the working party, yesterday insisted that "very small" numbers of women were imprisoned for default and that JPs only jailed defaulters "in despair at the end of the process."

## Desecration of the fallen



Bill Macpherson, of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, at Bunyans cemetery, above, near Arras, where 51 out of 54 headstones from the graves of First World War dead have been broken. Below right, a headstone at Aval Wood cemetery. Photograph: Brian Harris

The French are angered and puzzled by attacks on First World War cemeteries, writes Steve Boggan in Arras

It was an obvious metaphor but an inevitable one. Rows of white headstones lay broken, fallen like the men they commemorated.

"A soldier of the Great War

- Known unto God," said the inscription on many. Others, those that fell face up, bore names: 77/71 B Gallacher, Royal Field Artillery, 6 May 1917; 39127 Private C W Cummings, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 23 August 1918, age 26.

In all, 163 headstones had been kicked over in two British war cemeteries in northern France.

"Whoever did this needs help," said Trilochan Prem, 57, the man with responsibility for about half the 300 war cemeteries running along the eastern sector of what used to be the Western Front.

"I was told about the damage on Monday morning and I came running in here," he said. "What I saw has left me totally demoralised. It is a disgusting crime."

Bill Macpherson, of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, was surveying the devastation in Aval Wood Military Cemetery in Vieux-Berquin on the edge of the Noye Forest.

"Sometime during last weekend, someone entered and kicked over 112 out of 414 headstones. Over the same two days, but not to be discovered until Tues-

day, another British military graveyard 20 miles away, Bunyans Cemetery in Tilloy-les-Mofflaines, south-east of Arras, was also desecrated. There, in isolation, surrounded by fields of wheat and sugar beet, an intruder kicked over 51 of 54 headstones, breaking at least half of them in two.

The war graves commission tends 473,101 graves in northern France on a £10m budget and enjoys the support and respect of the vast majority of French people. One who drove along the lonely dirt road that leads to Bunyans Cemetery to pay his respects was Robert Retrolif, a local rail worker.

"I wish I could get my hands on the bastard who did this," he said. "I can't understand it. But now there is vandalism everywhere. There are too many 16- to 18-year-olds with no work and nothing to do."

The region does have a high level of unemployment - between 15 and 20 per cent, the legacy of the collapse of coal mining - but that does not explain why two such determined, energetic and powerful attacks should be aimed at soldiers who died during the ebb and flow of German offensives in 1917 and 1918.

Mike Johnson, director of the

war graves commission, said 12 much smaller incidents have happened in the past six years. "Nine of those have been at this time of year, just as the school holidays have started," he said. "It would appear to be a case of mindless vandalism carried out by youths."

"There was a report of youths fooling around near the Aval Wood cemetery over the weekend."

But not everyone agrees. While the consensus of opinion among local people would seem to rule out a political motive - including the row over mad cow disease - some believe that the two attacks may be linked.

"There was no youthful debris - beer cans, cigarette packets - at either site, and the scale of both attacks was fearsome."

At Bunyans, there was some-

thing in the apparent frenzy that brought to mind the anger that leads to the mutilation of horses.

The French were anxious to make amends yesterday. Pierre Pasquini, the minister for veterans' affairs, paid a visit to Aval Wood to lay a wreath. It was a gesture that was appreciated warmly by Mr Prem, who had been deeply moved by what had happened.

"These aren't the feelings people are supposed to take home with them when they visit a place like this," he said.

"At Kohima Commonwealth War Cemetery in north east India is a plaque which carries a fairly common inscription that I always remember. It just says: 'When you go home, tell them of us and say, We gave our today for their tomorrow.'"

## SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

The Dunblane massacre inquiry ended yesterday with a claim on behalf of the families that the legal ownership of guns lay at the heart of Thomas Hamilton's murderous rampage. Colin Campbell QC told Lord Cullen that the argument of members of the gun lobby was that gun crime would continue so long as there were illegally-held weapons.

"This fails to address the important question in my submission - what about the Hamiltons of the world, who would not arm themselves from the criminal underworld, what about the impulsive killer, the suicide and the extended suicide?" he asked. Iain Bonomy QC, closing for the Crown, said legislators would have "hard decisions" to take, requiring "good sense and sound judgement in large measure."

The secret of those phantom traffic jams on motorways which seem to have no apparent cause is revealed in a study by the Royal Automobile Club undertaken for the ITV current affairs series 3D to be screened tonight. The jams are usually caused by one bad driver who brakes, forcing others to hit the brakes and reduce speed. Other reasons include middle lane-hogging, sharp late turns by motorists leaving the motorway and constant lane switching by drivers who think the traffic is faster on the other side.

The RAC says that a 10-mile tailback can take half an hour to build up and two hours to clear and will contain an average of 8,000 vehicles. Jams can be caused by motorists "rubbernecking" at an accident, watching hot air balloons or even answering their mobile phones. *Christian Wolmar*

A £1m reward to help catch the IRA terrorists responsible for the massive Manchester bomb was announced yesterday. A similar offer has been made for the successful conviction of the bombers behind the Docklands explosion in east London in February.

Commander John Grieve, head of Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, appealed to members of the criminal fraternity and those he described as "the dodgy end of the motor trade" to provide information. He also asked for help in finding where the Manchester bombers loaded the lorry and wired the 1.5-ton device used in the attack on the city centre on 16 June. *Jason Bennett*

Police investigating the machete attack at an infants' school on Monday were last night still questioning a 32-year-old man arrested on Tuesday in connection with the incident, which left seven people injured. Horrett Irving Campbell was being interviewed by detectives as officers continued to comb the area around St Luke's Church of England infants' school, Wolverhampton, for the weapon used in the attack. One of the victims, Wendy Willington, 29, left New Cross hospital yesterday after treatment for a fractured jaw and cuts to the head. One woman and three young children remained in hospital and were all said to be improving.

Some of the UK's best wetland wildlife sites are having "the very life sucked out of them" by over-abstraction of ground water, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds told MPs yesterday. A report by English Nature claims that 56 of 152 wetland Sites of Special Scientific Interest have been "significantly damaged by abstraction" for industrial or household use.

Reducing "luxury" water use for large gardens should be considered, the society's chief executive, Barbara Young, told the Commons' Environment Committee, which is investigating water conservation. But persuading consumers to cut back on garden use may be difficult, the Consumers' Association warned. *Karen Baker*

Detectors were waiting by the bedside of a seriously ill nine-year-old girl yesterday to try to establish how her mother and younger sister died on a walk home from school. Kent police have launched an investigation into the deaths of Lin Russell, 45, and her six-year-old daughter Megan, whose bodies were found yards from the body of their pet terrier in woods near Chilenden, Kent. Josephine was found near her mother and sister with head injuries for which she is being treated at a London hospital. Mrs Russell had left the family home in Nottingham to pick up her daughters from school in Goodnestone at 4pm and walk home with them. Police said they would have to await the outcome of post-mortem examinations before they would know the cause of death.

Psychiatrists launched an unprecedented attack on yesterday warning that services were in a "state of deep crisis". At its annual general meeting, members of the Royal College of Psychiatrists overwhelmingly supported a resolution which severely criticised the shortage of acute beds for the mentally ill, a squeeze on staffing and the "intolerable risk" this presented. The psychiatrists called for a halt on any further closures of beds and said the Government should urgently develop 24-hour nursing care for those who could not cope by themselves in the community. They warned that severely mentally ill patients were being discharged to hostels staffed by volunteers "many untrained, unaware of the realities of mental illness and unprepared for the challenges of caring for the severely mentally ill". *Glenda Cooper*

A 13-year-old boy was still being questioned last night by detectives hunting the killer of Jade Matthews, nine, found battered to death on a railway line. The schoolboy walked into a police station in North Merseyside on Tuesday night, accompanied by an adult, in response to an appeal for information about the murder of Jade, who disappeared from her home in Bootle on Sunday afternoon. Her body was found just over a mile away the next morning. She had been beaten to death with a thick wooden stave. Police said yesterday that someone who knew the girl had positively identified her as being with a brown-haired boy of about 13 or 14 halfway between her home and the railway siding where her body was found.

There was embarrassment at Tony Blair's private office yesterday over a personal invitation to join the Labour Party from Mr Blair to former hard-line right-wing Tory MP Peter Brumfitt - now a Conservative candidate for the next election. Pro-hanger Mr Brumfitt, who lost his Leicester East seat in 1987, gained worldwide fame when he was an MP by volunteering to act as executioner.

Mr Brumfitt said: "We have all heard about Mr Blair's great plans to set up the most up-to-date and state-of-the-art computer media centre to back up their latest membership drive. Clearly, their costly system is in absolute chaos, as evidently are their records." Mr Brumfitt, who has been prospective Tory candidate for The Wrekin since last December, said: "You would have thought they would have known that."

## THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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INSTRUMENTS  
FOR PROFESSIONALS

## Nervous MPs accuse Speaker of setting up ambush on pay

ANTHONY BEVINS  
Political Editor

Jittery MPs were last night making their excuses and flaking away from a straight vote for a £9,000 pay rise, fearing a backlash from voters and the disapproval of party leaders.

Some MPs also roundelay on the Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, accusing her of setting up an ambush. They said that the Speaker's choice of amendments loaded the late night vote against a straight choice - between the meagre 3 per cent rise urged by all three main party leaders, and the tempting 26 per cent recommended by last week's report from the Senior Salaries Review Body.

The loyalists were planning to back the leadership of John Major, Tony Blair and Fuddy Ashdown in voting for 3 per cent restraint - an increase of

just over £1,000 on the existing backbench pay of £24,083.

Anarchy was aggravated by the fact that while some whips were campaigning for "loyal" restraint, other whips were actively working to go for the money.

But there was still strong resentment against the Prime Minister's decision to set up the Senior Salaries Review Body exercise - and then repudiate its recommendations.

Meanwhile, the Commons authorities appear to be making an attempt to crack down on expenses fiddlers, with a demand that all future car mileage claims should be justified.

The key motion tabled by Mr Newton said: "Arrangements shall be made by the Fees Of-

fice for ensuring claims are supported."

Mr Newton said in a written Commons reply that in the year to last April 176 MPs claimed mileage of up to 74.1p a mile on journeys on excess of 20,000 miles. Currently, the Commons Fees Office only insists on details of journeys made in excess of 25,000 miles.

Last year, Lord Nolan, chairman of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, said: "Fiddling your expenses ... is fraud, a crime, whether it is done by a Member of Parliament or anybody else."

But one experienced MP said last night that MPs continue to fiddle for as long as their salary was kept down.

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ice for ensuring claims are supported."

Robin Cook. Now I yield to no one in my admiration for Mr Cook. The light of an exceptional intelligence burns bright in his eye. When his forehead creases into a frown, someone is in trouble. But now there was nothing. Mr Cook, as far as I could tell, had succumbed to a combination of the heat, his extensive duties and the tedious expertise of his colleagues.

Hands folded on his lap, his brow smooth and mouth in a tiny smile, Mr Cook was at rest - and he was not alone. Further down the Labour front bench, George Foulkes also seemed to be in the embrace of Morpheus. He only stirred when Gwyneth Dunwoody (Lab, Croydon) gave the Government her opinion on its policy for the BBC's World Service: "That's the greatest load of rubbish I've ever heard." George managed a gurgle of agreement before return-

ing to his recumbent pose. It was a magnificent piece of solidarity from a man mentally elsewhere. Marks 9 out of 10. A most effective performance. Which leaves number 3: that MP's do a vast amount of work on my behalf and yours. So pay them more.

At 4pm, Patrick Nicholls (Con, Tewkesbury) proceeded to tell the terrible tale of Devon County Council and the Foskett family. Apparently little Richard Foskett wanted to join his brother in Moretonhampstead, but was forced to go to Bovey Tracey by evil Liberal Democrats who wouldn't pay his bus fare. By now, even Dame Elsie Kellaway (Cons, Wensleydale), but Mr Nicholls was under threat. Did the House know about the Walkers of Newton Abbott? ...

Marks 8 out of 10. Even the public gallery was impressed. So (I thought) pay them more.



DAVID AARONOVITCH

The eyes of the public were upon them. MPs knew that they were being scrutinised with particular vigour by the denizens of the press gallery. So it was vital that three unmissable messages reached us.

Unmissable message number 1: that MPs are knowledgeable, possess valuable expertise and unusual insights - so pay them more.

And indeed these qualities were amply demonstrated during the hour-long Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Question Time. Members gave their views on Kashmir, made the mental journey to Burundi, bemused Burma, extolled Eastern Europe, indicted Indonesia and commended the Turkish occupation of Cyprus.

Marks 2 out of 10. Nothing was said that could not have been gleaned from a couple of back copies of the *Economist*. The *Economist*, however, is occasionally interesting. So what about ... Unmissable message number 2: that MPs work so hard, they are perpetually knackered. So pay them more.

At about 3.20pm, as junior Foreign Office minister Sir Nicholas Bonsor was ponderously agreeing that trade sanctions against anybody would simply mean that perfidious foreigners would muscle in on our contracts, I stole a glance at the Shadow Foreign Secretary.

كما في الأصل

Funny business: New blockbuster uses old techniques but runs into very modern controversies

# Disney draws back from computer age

LOUISE JURY  
and DAVID LISTER

The opening of the latest Walt Disney blockbuster, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, is being seen in the film industry as a successful riposte by the world's leading animation studio to the high-tech cinemas now challenging its supremacy.

Disney appears convinced there is still a market for traditional animation, despite the success of *Toy Story*, with its 3-D computer-generated images.

Yet even Disney has a finger on the software pulse. It agrees that its animation techniques are responding to technological innovation. A spokesman for Buena Vista International, Walt Disney's distributing subsidiary, says that for some time now computer effects had been used in their animated features.

The wonders of computer wizardry are widespread. The stampede scene in *The Lion King*, released in Britain two years ago, was computer-generated, and there are numerous examples in the more recent film, *Pocahontas*. Even five years ago, the techniques were used in *Beauty and the Beast*.

"Fifty years ago computers weren't around, but they're now involved in all kinds of films. Movies have just moved with the times," Buena Vista's spokesman said. "Computers let you do things that maybe you wouldn't have done otherwise. There's a need to make films more spectacular and they allow you to do that. It is pretty magical stuff that you wouldn't have seen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*."

Many film characters, however, are still sketched out by hand, and computers are unlikely to take over completely.



Light years apart: Gromit (above) may be Plasticine but he can still stand up to 'Toy Story's' computer-aided Buzz

money is going on computer effects." Ironically, the latest British success is based on the lowest tech special effect of all: Plasticine. Michael Rose, head of development for Aardman Animations, creators of the award-winning *Wallace and Gromit* films, said his company was sticking to Plasticine for their first major feature film project that is now underway and intended for worldwide distribution.

"We're making a traditional model-animated film in the style that we've always used with *Wallace and Gromit*," said Mr Rose. "In general, the success of any animated film is entirely down to the originality of the idea and originality of the script. I don't think it's a question of either/or. One does not really replace the other."

"Whether you use computer-generated images as in *Toy Story* or model animation as we do, it's just a technique, a different look. The nice thing about Plasticine is you can see the thumbprints and all. You see the texture. We like that. You can never get that feeling with computers. But we do use computers in post-production."

Mr Rose agreed with Disney about the expense of high-tech. "Toy Story" cost about \$40 million. High-tech is neither very cheap nor expensive. Computers aren't necessarily cheaper."

He said he did not think animation would die out altogether. "It's been around since the invention of cinema, and it is a wonderfully concise and expressive medium. You can do things with animation that you can't necessarily do with live action. You can tell stories in a way that is quite different and quite magical. I don't think that will ever be replaced."

"When you see a £70 million movie with a B-list cast, the

"With *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* it's very much a mixture," he said. "If you use computers for everything, it is more expensive. They may be quicker but they are not cheaper."

The all-round computer approach has been seen in blockbusters where budgets have concentrated on special effects rather than cast.

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"When you see a £70 million movie with a B-list cast, the



Outcast but not downcast: Quasimodo in spiritual mood lightens Disney's forbidding blockbuster, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* Still: Walt Disney

## How they made Quasimodo into apple pie

DAVID LISTER

PL Travers reportedly wept when she saw what Disney had done to her creation, *Mary Poppins*. Victor Hugo may be turning the odd somersault in his grave with the opening of the latest Disney blockbuster, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

The £32m movie has been described as the darkest animated feature to come out of the Disney studios. It is also the sexiest. Esmeralda, voice by Demi Moore, breasts and cleavage unknown but unprecedentedly evident, has been accused of being too seductive. Judge Frollo has a depraved lust for her, sniffing her hair with what one magazine called "fetishistic hunger". The film has also been accused of having homosexual undertones.

Even the gargoyles are revolting.

Actor Jason Alexander, whose voice springs from the mouth of one of Notre Dame's animated gargoyles, said he would not be allowing his four-year-old son to see the picture.

They accused *Aladdin* of political correctness when the title song was altered so as not to offend Moslims, and *The Lion King* of political incorrectness when the wicked uncle was of a darker hue than his relatives.

This time the controversy is over cultural correctness. The all-pervading apple pie effect of anaesthetising the classics of world literature is bringing acrimony to the studio.

The apple-pieing of Hugo has sparked cultural indignation. The reduction of Quasimodo from what one reviewer termed "grotesquely tragic figure to gaunt gargoyle in need of corrective

surgery" could be an animation too far. Peter Goldberger in the *New York Times* bemoaned the debasement of high culture for high profits and claimed Disney was robbing the minds of children who would grow up believing that dancing hippos in tatus are de rigueur for classics of literature and music.

His article opened up a criticism of the Disneyification of culture that had been notably dormant in American society.

Disney has been stung by the criticism, but is not about to change the lucrative habit of a lifetime. A spokesman for Buena Vista International said: "Disney stuck very closely to the original story. In adapting a classic, the point of it is to make it fun and bring it across to a mainstream audience which may have heard of it but not know it. They (the stories) are maybe slightly expanded upon."



Quasimodo in Hugo's original

## Vanishing seahorses worth their weight in silver

NICHOLAS SCHOON  
Environment Correspondent

Seahorses, the strangest of fish, are being over-exploited by man and may soon join the long list of species in danger of extinction. They have already become worth their weight in silver, as numbers dwindle.

The growing demand for seahorses in traditional Chinese

medicine is the main reason for their misfortunes, according to a report by Oxford University Zoologist Amanda Vincent. The report for Traffic, a part of the World Wide Fund for Nature which investigates the trade in endangered wildlife, says that the fish, ground up and eaten in their millions, are thought to relieve asthma, impotence, pain and general lethargy.

Their dried bodies are also sold in huge numbers as tourist curios. Yet another threat is the trade in live seahorses for aquarium-keepers, though they seldom breed in captivity, and usually die after a month or two.

Their unique appearance goes a long way to explaining mankind's growing appetite for a small, spiky, armour-plated creature which is not worth

eating. That, and the fact that it is not a fast mover.

Seahorses pair off for life and it is the male who becomes "pregnant", storing the female's eggs in his swollen brood pouch while the embryos develop. At birth, hundreds of miniature seahorses burst out.

Their dried bodies have been ground up for use in oriental medicines for centuries. But as

China and neighbouring countries undergo economic growth, with seahorse flesh already incorporated. This means that any size and variety of the 35 species of seahorse is now fair game for medicinal use, whereas previously it used to be only the larger ones.

The client used to choose individual seahorses which the pharmacist ground up with other products to produce an individually-tailored medicine, but recently there has been a

switch to ready-made medicines, with seahorse flesh already incorporated. This means that any size and variety of the 35 species of seahorse is now fair game for medicinal use, whereas previously it used to be only the larger ones.

In a three-year study which involved more than 400 interviews and visits around the world, Dr Vincent found the

classic signs of over-exploitation of a species. Sellers say the demand is almost limitless, the price is soaring, catches are falling and the fish on sale are becoming smaller.

Dr Vincent suggests that one of the best hopes for the future is to help poor fishermen, who depend on catching wild seahorses for their livelihood, to learn how to farm them.

## Mr. Darren Balles of Durham

is charged by the second.

It's like every other Orange customer. Without exception.

## ULSTER ON THE BRINK

## Isolated by barbed wire and hatred,

## Orangemen dig in as Drumcree tension rises

MICHAEL STREETER  
AND COLIN BROWN

Tensions at the siege of Drumcree reached a new peak yesterday when Orangemen confronted RUC officers with 30-ton mechanical digger.

Policemen immediately put on riot gear fearing a possible loyalist attempt to demolish the concrete and barbed wire barrier which marks the spot where Orange marchers have been stopped from entering the Catholic Garvagh Road area of Portadown, County Armagh.

The army responded by edging their own digger closer to the blockade, but senior policemen eventually persuaded loyalists to move their vehicle out of sight, some 300 yards away.

A senior Unionist official admitted to being "worried" by the presence of the digger, which was greeted with wild cheers from many demonstrators on its arrival.

Earlier, the army erected a second line of barbed wire between police and protesters after a section of the crowd had breached the original barrier on Tuesday night.

However, there were hopeful signs of a move towards a peaceful solution to the stand off when David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, met four church leaders at nearby Armagh.

After talks with the Rev Harry Allen, the Presbyterian Moderator, Church of Ireland primate Dr Robin Eames, the Rev. Kenneth Best, the presi-

dent of the Methodist church in Ireland, and the Catholic primate Cardinal Cahal Daly, Mr Trimble said the session had been "worthwhile" and he promised another meeting in the near future.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister yesterday appealed to the Unionist leaders to accept a compromise to end the siege.

"The confrontation we have seen, the mob violence we have seen, does nobody any good in Ireland. And I think the best

way of dealing with it is to ransom".

In another development, the UVF para-military organisation denied involvement in the murder of Catholic taxi driver and student Michael McGoldrick, who was found dead with a bullet wound near his home in Lurgan on Monday morning.

The killing raised tensions after nationalists insisted it was a sectarian murder carried out by loyalists. The UVF also denied they were orchestrating the protests and roadblocks which have threatened to bring Northern Ireland to its knees in the worst loyalist violence seen for over 20 years. The UVF has already denied it was behind Mr McGoldrick's murder.

Last night, the RUC again warned motorists not to travel unless the journey was essential as new roadblocks sprung up throughout the province.

At Drumcree, the arrival of Orangemen from Belfast was expected to a swell a crowd of just a few hundred to close on 10,000. Attention is now focused on the traditional 11 July celebrations today, which mark the eve of the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne and will once again make Drumcree the focal point for massive

the future is very bleak."

David Trimble: Meeting with church leaders

way that is going to be resolved is by negotiation at local level in the communities," Mr Major said.

The Irish deputy prime minister, Dick Spring, described the situation in Northern Ireland as "very serious". Speaking in Dublin, Mr Spring said: "I think we have all seen over the last number of days the inherent risk in what is happening in Northern Ireland. If people proceed down this line then certainly the

future is very bleak."



Troublespot: Soldiers putting up barricades in Drumcree yesterday, watched by Orangemen whose march has been stopped. Photograph: Pacemaker

## Latest chapter in a troubled history

DAVID MCKUTTRICK

Ireland Correspondent

Northern Ireland has seen so many acts of violence and political upheaval during the Troubles that the word "crisis" has come to be reserved for particularly momentous episodes.

The present crisis is already being described by many as

one of the most serious they can recall, though, in fact, it has

been surpassed in terms of either historic import or, more grimly, the number of casualties.

A number of episodes are unlikely to be forgotten by those who lived through them. The first major disruption came in August 1969, when simmering resentments and occasional

street brushes erupted into widespread violence.

Eight people died as Catholics and Protestants clashed in a number of areas of Belfast, while in Londonderry Catholics battled with the RUC. The disorder led to the first deployment of British troops on the streets. Thousands of people moved home in a short period, most of

them seeking the perceived safety of entirely Catholic or entirely Protestant districts.

The situation deteriorated over the next two years, until the next major upheaval, in August 1971, after internment without trial was introduced for republicans. Scores died in the immediate aftermath as gun battles broke out between the army and the IRA. Again, thousands of people moved home.

The following year, 1972, was one of sustained crisis, with almost 500 people killed in the most violent year ever experienced. The killing of 13 Catholic marchers by paratroopers on Bloody Sunday in Londonderry sent shock waves through Ireland. Meanwhile, Protestant paramilitary groups emerged as a formidable force after the British government of the day abolished the Unionist-dominated Stormont parliament, and the violence became a three-way affair.

In the years that followed, shootings and bombings claiming multiple casualties became almost commonplace, with both republicans and loyalists claiming their shares of the death toll.

In May 1974 came the loyalist general strike, or constitutional stoppage, which some observers view as the nearest precedent to the present Drumcree stand-off. On that occasion

most of Northern Ireland's economic and social life ground to a halt as loyalists blocked roads and cut power supplies.

While many Protestants voluntarily stopped work, there was also widespread intimidation at roadblocks all over the country, as well as a number of acts of violence. That action achieved its aim of bringing down the power-sharing administration.

Though differing from the current crisis in many respects, the 1974 stoppage is remembered as a time of great uncertainty, one of the rare occasions when it looked as if the authorities might lose control.

A situation of similar gravity was experienced in 1981, when the deaths of 10 imprisoned republicans by hunger strike appeared to destabilise the whole of Northern Ireland. That moment passed, but another such arrived in 1985 when the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement by London and Dublin produced loyalist uproar.

The following months brought rioting, marches and protests, and a campaign of attacks on the heads of police officers.

That was the last time when Northern Ireland appeared to be on the brink, but if other crises serve as reminders that this seemingly normal society can, with little or no warning, be catapulted into convulsion.

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## ULSTER ON THE BRINK

## communities see return of dark days

## A frightened enclave living under siege

MICHAEL STREETER

At first glance, Ligoniel looks an attractive place to live. But it is under siege - a small Catholic enclave in an overwhelmingly Protestant area, just north of Belfast's Crumlin Road.

In bright July sunshine yesterday, the Divis and Black Mountains were a tranquil backdrop to the 2,000-strong community.

But on Monday night, the worst nightmares of the residents were realised when, spurred on by events at Drumcree, loyalist gangs effectively sealed off the community from the outside world by blocking the only two routes in and out and burning telephone cables with petrol to cut off communications.

Ligoniel, a former spinning mill area, dating from the 18th century, has long been a scene for loyalist murders of Catholics. The current violence is all the more frightening for that.

The Catholics in the area took little comfort from loyalist paramilitary leaders' public condemnation yesterday of the intimidation and violence across Belfast over the past four days.

An elderly man summed up local feeling: "We live in a beautiful area and we used to go for walks up the mountain. When the Troubles were at their height, we always used to look over our shoulder and wonder who might be following us in a car. For 18 months we could walk without fear, but now we're looking over our shoulders again."

The main road out of Ligoniel, leading to Belfast's international airport, was clear yesterday, but the community fears more attacks at any time. "Most of us don't even think of going out of here - the only way out is through loyalist areas," said an elderly man.

Throughout those areas and across Belfast, public transport

was largely limited to the early hours of the day. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions reported that many workers were unable to turn up for work.

People who needed to travel were being advised to make their journeys early in the day, as from early evening onwards, roads across the province became increasingly difficult to negotiate because of burnt-out vehicles, deliberately felled trees, or the risk of car-jacking.

The RUC was understood to be unwilling to clear roads that might result in violent confrontation and inflame the situation further.

With businesses opening for half the day only, and the public heeding police advice to stay indoors, Belfast city centre looked like a ghost town by early afternoon. Hospital outpatient services in the north of Belfast had also been affected.

The Northern Ireland tourist industry, which had enjoyed 18 months of growth before the end of the ceasefire, reported that many tourists who were "desperate" to leave Belfast found themselves unable to do so, as major road and rail routes and access to the international airport were blocked by protesters.

Hundreds of holidaymakers from the province missed flights out as protesters mounted roadblocks in Co. Antrim. An airport spokeswoman said some travellers, including invalids and children, had left their cars and walked the last mile to the airport in their determination to get away. Many others arrived for their flights up to 10 hours early.

Hotels reported large numbers of cancellations and "no-shows", while the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, appealing for calm, acknowledged that the latest trouble could undo all the positive work that had increased visitors to the province last year by 20 per cent.

"We are obviously very concerned," a spokesman said.



'I've never seen it as dangerous and sinister'

DAVID MCKITTRICK

hicles, most of which have been hijacked. They block the main roads with human blockades. Mr Mallon said: "They have been very abusive to people - demanding identification, asking to see people's driving licences, turning them back. There has been verbal abuse and in some cases physical abuse."

The area has been virtually cut off for days. There isn't a road out of the town that isn't blocked off. In the smaller lanes trees have been felled, and on larger roads they are using ve-

between people at all. I have never seen it as dangerous and as sinister. I've lived through all this last 25 years and I think this is much more dangerous even than the 1970s in terms of the intensity of the concentrated bitterness and the potential for long-term damage. It will leave a terrible residue of bitterness on all sides."

"People can't get to work, they can't get to the shops, commercial life is at a standstill and there's no communication

Ian Paisley were too cocky about getting the parade through last year, it got the Catholics' backs up. I don't know what's going to resolve it now but they'll have to talk. The trouble is that our people are really up in arms. They believe they have the right to march, and they believe the police have over-reacted against them. It is worse than all the damage the IRA has done."

"Meanwhile a leading figure in the Orange Order who prefers to remain anonymous, admitted that the present Drumcree crisis was causing more damage to Northern Ireland than IRA bombs."

"For 26 years the IRA bombed us, and for 26 years the people were defiant and stood up to them. But today the country's being ruined - we're going to lose tourists, businesses are failing, it's bad for everybody. It is worse than all the damage the IRA has done."

"I think this is a terrible mess, it was a terrible bad move to do this. David Trimble and

the IRA has done."

Stand-off was crisis waiting to happen

JOJO MOYES and MICHAEL STREETER Belfast

Mediators have been working with both Protestant and Catholic communities since July of last year in an attempt to defuse a future flashpoint.

Brendan McAllister and Joe Campbell, joint heads of Mediation Network - an independent organisation set up in the 1980s to reduce conflict - have been at Drumcree since Monday attempting to broker the kind of compromise achieved at last year's stand-off. "The marches have been hanging over them all year. The work was done in expectation that this would be another flashpoint," a source close to the process said.

A spokesman for the network confirmed its involvement but refused to give details, describing the situation as too sensitive. "We've been talking to members of all communities, not just the leaders," the spokeswoman said.

It was expected that nationalists would meet with Orangemen in December, but according to the source, the Orangemen felt the meeting "wasn't necessary" in the light of their perceived victory last year. "We wanted to do this, even though we'd been insulted. But they refused point-blank," a nationalist source said.

In January, the network held meetings with church leaders and the RUC Chief Constable. Sir Hugh Annesley, who encouraged them to continue. But by Easter, with no compromise in sight, the source said that even Robin Eames, the Primate of All Ireland, became pessimistic of finding a way forward.

A flurry of last-minute initiatives failed to achieve any progress, with both sides of the sectarian divide blaming the other for the lack of success. And such is the pessimism now, that some believe that even the mediation network may have privately given up hope.

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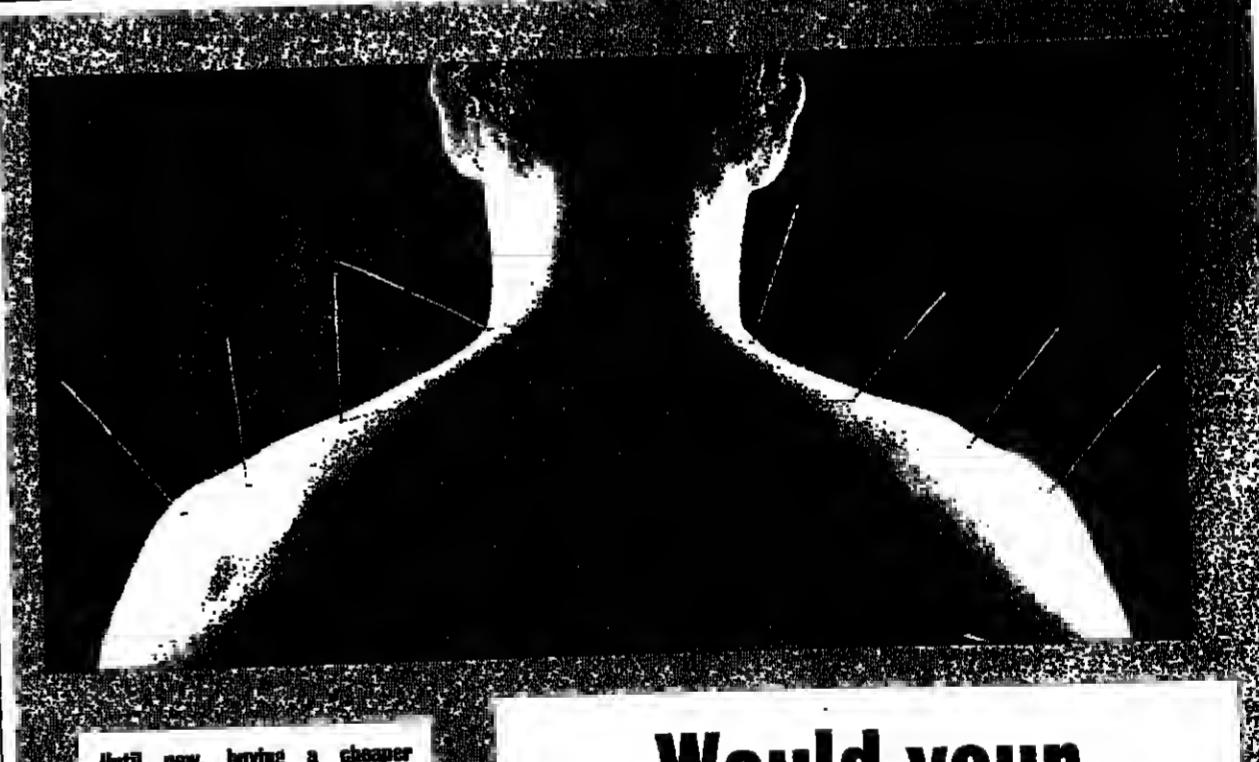
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THE INDEPENDENT

# PLAY FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



## GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE

British GP July 14

German GP July 28

Hungarian GP August 11

Belgian GP August 25

Italian GP September 8

Portuguese GP September 22

Japanese GP October 13



## WIN a drive in a grand prix car

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**F**ormula 1 Dream Team is just like Fantasy Football: you pick and manage your dream grand prix team to score points over the coming season.

Even though the grand prix season has started, it is not too late to join in: pit your wits against other enthusiasts and you could win our overall 1996 champion's prize, a drive in a Formula One car plus additional prizes for each race.

Your team must comprise three drivers, a chassis and an engine; your budget is £40 million. Make

your selections from the grand prix shopping list printed below; the only restriction is that your third driver must come from the £1 million category.

Details of how to enter are given on this page. You can enter a team at any point during the grand prix season but the earlier you enter, the greater your chances of being our overall champion. Remember, there are prizes for the winning Dream Team in each individual grand prix so you can enter a different team for each race.

**HOW YOU SCORE**  
Points are awarded per race to the top six finishers, based on the Formula One World Championship points scoring system (10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1) but with an extra 10 points awarded to each of the top six finishers.

All drivers are eligible to score for a top six finish but can also notch up extra points as follows:

- The fastest driver in race-day warm-up will collect six points, with five for the second and so on down to one point for the sixth quickest.

- Drivers score one point for each place they make up over their grid position. Points are not deducted by losing places.

- Five points are lost if your driver posts first retirement, four for second down to one point lost for the fifth retirement.

- If your driver makes the quickest pitstop (from the entry of the pit-lane to the exit) you gain five points.

- If your driver sets the fastest lap time in the race, you gain five points.

- If your driver receives a stop/go penalty, you lose five points.

- If your driver starts on pole position, you gain five points.

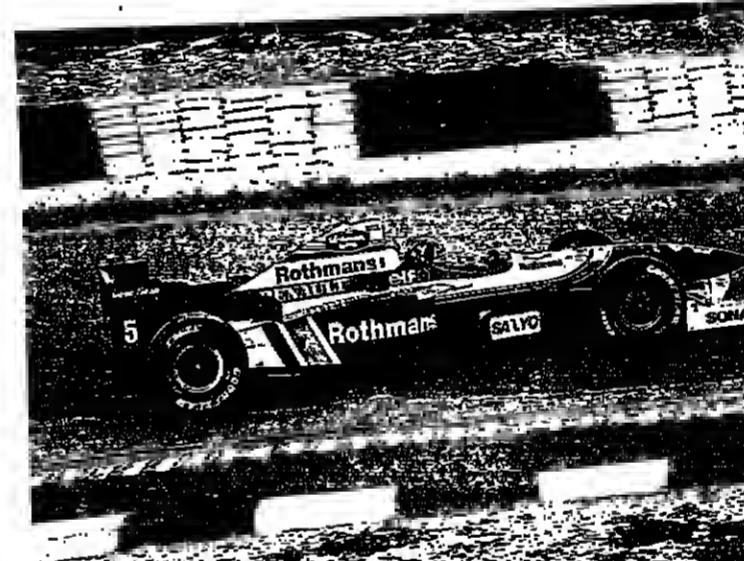
- The Independent will name a Driver of the Day after each race for a particularly impressive performance, worth five points.

- Non-qualification for a grand prix loses you two points. If a driver is on the FIA's published starting grid but fails to take the start, no points are lost.

- Drivers removed from the results for any reason lose all points gained that weekend. Any driver not competing in a grand prix weekend scores no points.

- Chassis score and lose points in the same way as drivers for a top six finish or any early retirement. The score is based on the first chassis home of that particular manufacturer. Likewise, only the first chassis retirement will count if they are both among the first five to retire.

- Engine rules are the same as the chassis rules, without the retirement penalties.



### DREAM TEAM TOP PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

### BRITISH GRAND PRIX PRIZE

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points following the British Grand Prix will win a very exclusive limited edition Jordan Grand Prix watch, one of only one hundred made.

**HOW TO ENTER**  
Choose your Dream Team from the shopping list on this page. Remember, you must choose three drivers (the third from the £1 million section), one chassis and one engine. You must not exceed your budget of £40 million.

Give your team a name and register it by ringing 0891 891 805.

You will immediately be asked the entry question: How many races are there? In this year's Formula One World Championship?

To enter your Dream Team details you can use one of two methods.

Method 1 uses a tone phone that lets you key in the code numbers of your driver, chassis and engine choices. The computer will check that your team falls within budget and is eligible.

Method 2 uses a non-tone phone and you give your details verbally. A budget check is not possible using this method.

When you have registered your Dream Team, you will be asked to predict the number of points this year's champion will notch up over the year. In case of a tie at the end of the season, the nearest figure to the champion's points will win the top prize. In the event of a further tie, the team that registered first will win.

Once you have registered your team you will be asked for your name, address and telephone number.

Your team selections plus your personal details will be played back to you and, when you confirm that they are correct, you will be given a PIN number.

This is confirmation of your entry and will enable you to access the score checking line.

There is no limit on the number of teams an individual can enter, but only one team can be registered per call.

**CHECKING YOUR SCORE**  
You can check your team's position at any time by calling 0891 891 806 and quoting your PIN number. If you want to know the individual driver, chassis and engine scores from the most recent race, call 0891 891 807. This line will also list the Top 50 Formula One Dream Teams.

### Rules

1. All telephone calls are charged at 59p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times, with a typical call to secure your entry lasting between five and seven minutes.

2. The deadline to be included in a particular race is midday the Friday prior to that race.

3. The judge's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative for prizes.

4. Employees of Newspaper Publishing Plc, Haymarket Publishing Ltd and all associated companies and their families are ineligible.

5. Entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK or the Irish Republic.

6. To be eligible for the main prize, you must hold a current driving licence, be no more than 1.95m tall and weigh no more than 220lbs.

7. All scores will be worked out according to the official FIA time sheets produced at the meeting. The values stated for drivers, engines and chassis bear no relation to real life.

8. In the event of a tie for the Dream Team Top Prize or for any of the individual race prizes, the team that registered first will win.

9. For lost PIN numbers, call 0891 891 808. Helpline: 01275 344183.

10. The Top 50 Teams Line, lists the top 50 teams from the last race. Both the Team Position Check Line and the Results & Top 50 Teams Line will be updated at 2 pm on the Monday following a race.

## Make your selection from the Grand Prix

### DRIVERS

£25m  
1 M Schumacher  
£23m  
2 J Alesi  
3 D Hill  
£20m  
4 G Berger  
£18m  
5 D Coulthard  
6 E Irvine  
7 J Villeneuve  
£13m  
8 M Häkkinen  
£10m  
10 M Brundle  
11 R Barrichello

12 J Herbert  
£6m  
13 M Salo  
14 P Lamby  
£4m  
15 P Dintz  
16 U Katayama  
17 J Verstappen  
£3m  
18 O Panis  
19 L Badoer  
20 R Rosset  
21 A Montermini  
£2m  
22 G Fisichella  
23 V Sospini\*  
24 T Marques\*

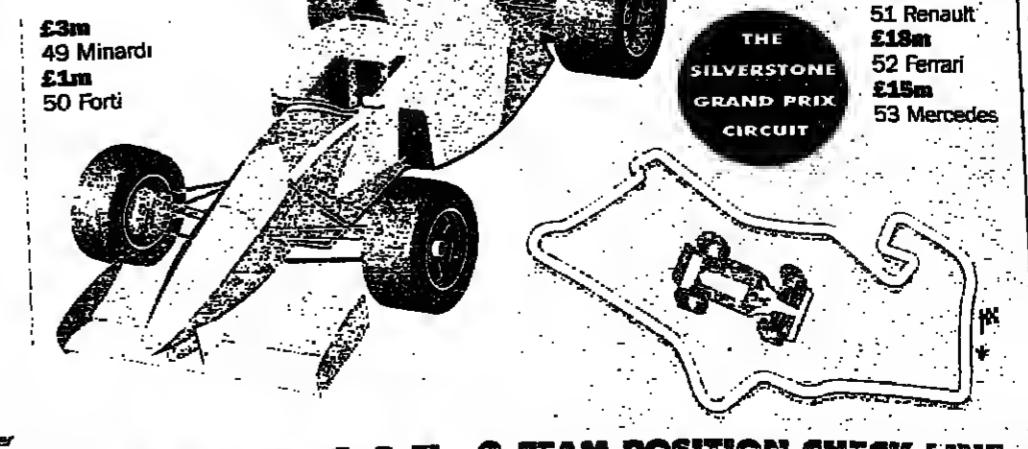
25 F Lagorce\*  
26 H Noda\*  
£1m  
28 M Blundell\*  
29 J-C Bouillon\*  
30 K Brack\*  
31 K Burt\*  
32 E Collard\*  
33 N Fontana\*  
34 D Franchitti\*  
35 N Lannini\*  
36 J Magnusson\*  
37 A Prost\*  
38 G Tarquini\*  
39 K Wendlinger\*

\*Not competing in the British GP but may compete later

### CHASSIS

£20m  
40 Benetton  
41 Williams  
£18m  
42 Ferrari  
£15m  
43 McLaren  
£14m  
44 Sauber  
45 Jordan  
£10m  
46 Ligier  
£6m  
47 Tyrrell  
£5m  
48 Arrows

£3m  
49 Minardi  
£1m  
50 Forti



### Shopping List

ENGINE  
£25m  
54 Peugeot  
£20m  
51 Renault  
£18m  
52 Ferrari  
£15m  
53 Mercedes

£22m  
54 Mugen  
£21m  
55 Ford V10  
£20m  
56 Yamaha  
£4m  
58 Hart  
£2m  
59 Ford Zetec  
V8  
£2m  
60 Ford ED  
V8

DREAM TEAM registration: 0891 891 805

TEAM POSITION CHECK LINE: 0891 891 806

RESULTS & TOP 50 TEAMS LINE: 0891 891 807

July 11 1991

July 11 1996

Gallery ambitions: Renaissance masterpiece completes collection as 20-year dream of linking with Trafalgar Square comes closer

# National spends £10m on Dürer

MARIANNE MACDONALD

The National Gallery has filled the only gap in its run of great artists by acquiring a long-sought-after painting by the German Renaissance master, Albrecht Dürer, its director announced yesterday.

Neil MacGregor said the small double-sided work, depicting St Jerome on the front and with a more hastily executed painting of comet on the back, was the first undisputed Dürer to take its place in a publicly owned British collection.

He declined in give the cost of the work, which the gallery bought by private treaty from the Bacon family trustees, but it is understood to have been between £5m and £10m.

Its purchase was made possible by a £5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and a £300,000 donation from the National Art Collections Fund, an independent charity. The rest came from the National Gallery's grant-in-aid, which it saved for the purchase, and private donations.

Dürer, the son of a goldsmith, was born in 1471, and brought up in Nuremberg, where he was apprenticed to a leading painter and book illustrator. The artist is particularly noted for his

paintings, woodcuts and engravings.

*St Jerome* depicts the saint against an atmospheric, rocky landscape and a golden sunset. It has been dated by scholars to around 1495. Dürer, then in his early twenties, had just made his first visit to Italy.

Characteristically, the lion birds and landscape details are meticulously executed. St Jerome is said to have removed a thorn from a lion's paw, and here he is holding a book, presumably the Bible.

The comet on the reverse may have been included because St Jerome was supposed to have had a vision of the Last Judgment, which was to be heralded by heavenly portents.

The purchase of the painting concludes what Mr MacGregor described at the launch of the gallery's annual report yesterday as "the most remarkable year for the gallery in a long time".

In August it acquired a 15th-century Spanish masterpiece by Bartolomé Bermejín, *St Michael Triumphant Over The Devil With The Donor Antonio Juan*, after a year of negotiations with the executors of Luton Hoo.

The painting, probably the

greatest Spanish Renaissance



Photograph: Keith Dabney

An attendant at the National Gallery inspecting the new Dürer acquisition yesterday



Dream ticket: An artist's impression of how the National Gallery would look if a pedestrianisation scheme gets the go-ahead

## Traffic-free vision could be realised

The National Gallery's 20-year-old dream of removing the noisy stream of traffic which runs between its entrance and Trafalgar Square could finally become a reality.

The gallery's new chairman, Philip Hughes, said he now understood that John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment was hoping to set the project in train during his period in office.

The "incredibly difficult circumstances" caused by the traffic running in front of its main entrance and exacerbating over-crowding on a narrow pavement thronged by tourists were apparent every day of the summer. But at last it appeared that the powers-that-be were minded to take action. "Not only Whitehall but Westminster council seem to be on our side. Hopefully for the first time in over 20 years a decision will be taken in allowing the whole Trafalgar Square area to be recaptured."

Last month, Westminster council applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £125,000, half the cost of producing a study on the implications of improving access to Trafalgar Square, Parliament Square and

Whitehall. "The whole thrust of the new study is to remove traffic from the front of the National Gallery," said Malcolm Murray-Clark, assistant director of transportation for Westminster council.

"What we need to look at very carefully is how best to manage the space which would be created in urban design terms, and in traffic and transportation terms, so that road users do not lose out as a result."

The study, supported by English Heritage, will also consider the removal of traffic from the road between St Margaret's church and Parliament Square.

Mr Hughes said: "The most exciting thing is that the road would be absolutely closed except for cyclists and pedestrians, so we could completely rethink the whole way people go into the gallery."

"At the moment it's a very inelegant way to enter one of the world's major galleries."

The National Gallery has already taken steps to improve another form of access - its opening hours, which have been extended to 8pm on Wednesdays and from noon to 6pm on Sundays.

### DAILY POEM

#### All We Know

By Don Rodgers

Not only Desdemona, but all of us  
must one day, or one night, receive our last  
kiss. It may be sweet or sour, its taste

may linger on into a long cold darkness;  
or we may wake in sunshine, in a state of grace,  
unsexed by expert angels with a light caress;

or we may not wake. And the giver of that kiss,  
unstooping, may lick his or her lips  
like wounds, look down on us and curse, or bless.

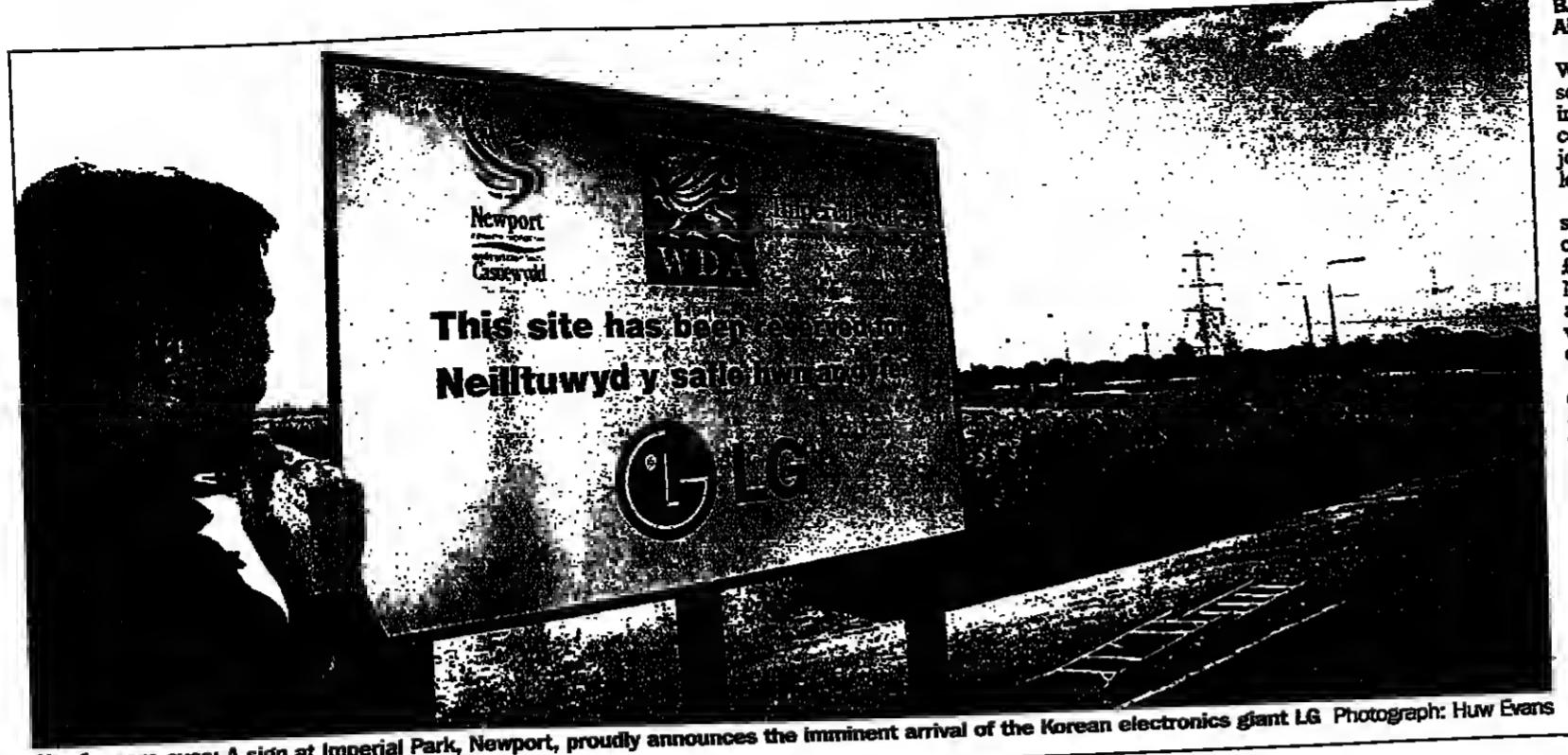
Don Rodgers was born in London in 1957 and lives and works in Swansea. His poetry has appeared in the *London Magazine*, *Poetry Wales*, the *Spectator* and the *Independent*. A first and very good collection, *Moontan*, was published recently by Seren.

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news

# English envy as Wales wins £1.7bn jobs boost



Site for sore eyes: A sign at Imperial Park, Newport, proudly announces the imminent arrival of the Korean electronics giant LG. Photograph: Huw Evans

BARRIE CLEMENT AND ANTHONY BEVINS

Wales yesterday celebrated securing the biggest inward investment in Europe, which could create up to 20,000 new jobs, as the rest of Britain looked on with envy.

While welcoming the decision by the South Korean conglomerate LG in site a £1.7bn electronics complex at Newport, English development agencies attacked a system which often gave the Celtic countries an unfair advantage.

John Bridge, chief executive of the Newcastle-based Northern Development Company, said that such massive projects should be handled by the Department of Trade in London. Josephine Cheral, the northeastern agency's international marketing director, pointed out that where grants of more than £1m were involved any potential inward investment into England was administered by the trade department. The Welsh and Scottish Offices could command much larger sums.

Company	Established	Product	Jobs	Value of investment
Samsung Electronics UK	1986-94	Electrical goods	2570	£4.7bn
Billingham, Cleveland		Excavators	100	not known
Samsung Heavy Industries	1995	Electrical goods	535	£38m
Hanover, N. Yorks		Videos	700	£35m
Goldstar Electric UK	1988-94	Audio eqpt.	100	£3.2m
Jarrow, Tyne & Wear		Audio tape	60	not known
Densco Electronics UK	1988-94	Acetate and paper	98	not known
Arden, N. Ireland	1990	Circuit boards	120	not known
Intel Corporation		Metallurgy	12	not known
Cramlington, Northumb.	1991	Systems	25	£3.5m
Sankyo Magnetic Ltd		Car audio	57	£1.8m
Haver, Middlesex	1991	Audio speakers	57	£1.8m
Imperial Graphic Products				
Bolton, Lancs	1992			
Widening Circuits				
Coleraine, N. Ireland	1993			
Micrology				
High-Tech Electronics				
Edinburgh, N. Ireland	1993			
Scientific Recovery				
Warrington, Cheshire	1993			

English regions yesterday complained that the Invest in Britain Bureau, an arm of the DTI, was out of sufficient control of the transactions concluded in Wales and Scotland.

Robert Hayman-Collins, director of marketing at the West Midlands Development Agency, said the secretaries of state for Wales and Scotland provided the Celtic fringe with an edge in terms of influence.

Via fits and starts such as the Welsh Development Agency, the Welsh and Scottish offices also owned land and property and were given a much freer hand.

But Tim Eggar, the Industry Minister, told BBC radio's *World at One*: "Scotland and Wales go through the same procedures as England and Wales." Westminster sources, however, said that securing the investment at Newport was a feather in the cap of William Hague, the Welsh Secretary — cocking a competitive snook at his Scottish counterpart, Michael Forsyth, who last visited Korea in May.

Perhaps the most telling statistic is that while the two Celtic nations won 52.2 per cent of all grants to assisted areas in the year to March, they only account for 14 per cent of the UK population. The lead taken by Wales and Scotland is particularly marked when contrasted with regions like Merseyside, so depressed that it was awarded European Objective 1 status, worth £1.6bn, in 1994. It has been reported that the rate of spending no Merseyside of the aid, and its inward investment record, is disappointing.

While the English were somewhat equivocal, the Principality registered its delight at a decision which will create 6,100 jobs in an unemployment black spot and a further 15,000 through suppliers and support industries. The South Koreans will build two factories on a 250-acre site at Imperial Park, New-

port — a semiconductor production facility and a consumer electronics plant producing television parts.

The project confirms Britain's status as the most attractive country in Europe for inward investment and may prevent a meltdown of the Conservative vote in Wales. Even before LG's arrival, one in five jobs in the British-based consumer electronics industry was located in Wales.

Mr Hague signed the agreement in Seoul yesterday, beating Mr Forsyth who was still hoping to attract part of the investment. LG Semiconductor wanted to locate near similar plants in Scotland's Silician Glen, but it was overruled by the parent company on the grounds that a single site was the most cost-effective.

Barry Hartop, chief executive of the WDA, brushed aside suggestions that grants and other aid had tipped the balance along with low wage rates in Wales. "There is no doubt that the loyalty and flexibility of the Welsh workforce was a key factor in LG's decision."

He refused to confirm an estimate that the package to lure the company amounted to some £200m — the equivalent of £30,000 a job — compared with around £20,000 for other companies.

The Koreans were apparently impressed by a training centre for the semiconductor industry to be run at the Newport business park by the University of Wales and Imperial College, London. But one of the considerations will almost certainly have been pay rates.

According to the New Earnings Survey, average gross weekly earnings in April 1995 in Wales were the second lowest in mainland Britain at £301.30. In Greater London the figure was £439.50, while the north west could offer £317.50.

## Ofsted urges schools to 'mentor' boys

JUDITH JUDD  
Education Editor

Schools need to take positive action to combat differences in the exam performance of boys and girls, inspectors say in a report published yesterday.

About one secondary school in five is bad at meeting the needs of one sex or another and most of these are failing boys, according to the inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

Paradoxically, the gap between girls and boys is often widest at successful mixed schools with girls doing better than their counterparts elsewhere. Boys did better than in other schools, but the girls benefited more from better teaching.

The report from Ofsted, headed by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, and the Equal Opportunities Commission suggests schools should try "mentoring" boys to ensure they work harder and organise themselves better.

Schools might try using computers to teach English, a subject in which boys lag well behind girls. And they might try to make more use of characteristics such as competitiveness in which boys are stronger, rather than emphasising dillige-

The report points out that girls do better than boys from the age of seven up to GCSE where they outclass them at every level. The only major subject in which girls do significantly less well than boys at GCSE is physics.

Boys are more likely to get very high or very low A-level scores than girls and do better

than girls in achieving the top A-level grades, given their GCSE results.

The frequent failure of secondary schools to achieve the same success with boys as they do with girls may be due to lack of rapport, the report says.

Boys are four times more likely than girls to be excluded from school.

Ona Stannard of Her Majesty's Inspectorate said: "We have had reasonable success in raising the achievement of girls. We must not be complacent about that. But now we need to be concerned about underachieving boys."

The report says it is not yet possible to decide whether mixed or single-sex schools work better but it says that some all-girls' schools and most all-boys' schools tend to have expectations of their pupils which conform to traditional stereotypes.

The Gender Divide: Office for Standards in Education and the Equal Opportunities Commission; HMSO: £7.95



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## MANDELA IN LONDON

JULY 11 1996

# President's hard sell bowls over business barons

MICHAEL HARRISON

The workmen hanging over the scaffolding burst into a ripple of applause and cheering as Nelson Mandela's limousine swept up beside the Barbican Centre. But this was nothing compared to the greeting the South African President was to receive from the 400 businessmen gathered inside to listen to him.

By the time he had finished his address the audience were on their fourth standing ovation, oblivious to the irony that among their ranks were some, perhaps many, who had helped to prop up the apartheid regime for nearly half a century and thus helped to keep their hero incarcerated on Robben Island.

For John Major, acting as warm-up man for the leader who needed "no introduction", it must have been a bittersweet occasion. In common with the rest of the hall, he thrilled to the mere association with Mandela, carried along on the extraordinary tidal wave of emotion, affection and awe that is accompanying the President on his state visit to these shores.

But it was also a reminder of the limitations of mere politicians. Mr Major has spoken at two CBI dinners and received, at best, only polite applause. What would he give for just one ounce of the adulation that Mr Mandela inspired yesterday from the hard-bitten ranks of British businessmen?

President Mandela was at the Barbican to thank Britain and its business community. "Without the support and encouragement of the British people and support from other stakeholders our victory would have been well-nigh impossible," he said in response to one questioner.

But he was also there to sell the new South Africa to a still-cautious worldwide investment

community whose finance is critical to the success of his rainbow nation.

Britain, President Mandela said, is of key economic importance to South Africa. British investments stand at £1.2bn, nine of the country's top 20 foreign employers are British, and in the last three years two-way trade has doubled to £4bn.

"The central message I bring to you this morning is that we should build on what exists. It is a message infused with urgency precisely because beyond the profound political changes, the iniquitous system that we set out to destroy is still alive and

is introducing "tax holidays" for investments that create jobs.

Above all, he said, "it has embarked on a programme to sell off some of the 173bn rand worth of assets in the state sector, starting with its telecommunications industry, airlines, radio stations and gas utility.

South Africa, said President Mandela, had inherited part of Britain's soul, creating a bond that went beyond sporting and cultural links. "You have made our re-entry into the global economy a pleasant landing," he said; now South Africa wanted to capitalise on that.

Here was the hard sell, presented in statesmanlike fashion. Britain is the financial bridgehead into South Africa for the rest of Europe and the US.

Back inside the hall the pledges were coming thick and fast, not least from Mr Major who said that, as South Africa's friend, Britain would argue for the widest possible access for the South African goods in Europe.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, followed that up with a pledge to put Britain's expertise in privatisation at the disposal of South Africa, while the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, promised support for exports through the Export Credit Guarantee Department and announced that Britain would host a trade mission to Cape Town next year in support of its bid for the 2004 Olympics.

Mr Major said there would be government-to-government support but it was stressed that it would always be dwarfed by commercial investment. How much could the Mandela factor add to those, one of his entourage was asked? "Who can say exactly, but the President has got to be worth at least an extra billion on the trade balance," he guessed. Amen to that.

President Mandela has made a start. His government is preaching wage moderation to a workforce long starved of basic amenities; it is lowering tariff barriers; it is slowly dismantling exchange controls; it

well. The poverty, decay in the social fabric and profound inequality that are the product of the past can only be eradicated with your co-operation."

South Africa, he promised, would play its part in the rehabilitation process needed to inspire investor confidence. Inflation is at a 20-year low and manufacturing industry is buoyant, yet in order to achieve its social goals and job creation targets, South Africa needs to double its growth rate to 6 per cent by the end of the decade.

President Mandela has made a start. His government is preaching wage moderation to a workforce long starved of basic amenities; it is lowering tariff barriers; it is slowly dismantling exchange controls; it

is coming to town tomorrow - but he's not called Jesus.

This isn't just another statesman, any old president of South Africa; here we have, in Brixton's words, a "hero", an "idol", a "godhead", someone who is "bigger than Michael Jackson". His name reverberates throughout the thorough. "To see Nelson Mandela - Oh my God! Just to touch his hand!"

But it's business as usual on Station Road, where the man himself will step out of his car tomorrow morning to an esti-



In tune: Nelson Mandela meets a member of the South African Music Village in London yesterday during his state visit. Photograph: Dan Chung

**'Britain is the financial bridgehead into South Africa for Europe and for the US'**

CLARE GARNER

Starry-eyed Pentecostal Christians stand outside Brixton tube station preaching the Second Coming. "The old days are gone. The Lord is coming." The air is alive with apocalyptic expectation: people are talking of little else. Their saviour really is coming to town tomorrow - but he's not called Jesus.

This isn't just another statesman, any old president of South Africa; here we have, in Brixton's words, a "hero", an "idol", a "godhead", someone who is "bigger than Michael Jackson". His name reverberates throughout the thorough. "To see Nelson Mandela - Oh my God! Just to touch his hand!"

But it's business as usual on Station Road, where the man himself will step out of his car tomorrow morning to an esti-

mated 5,000-strong reception. African colours flutter in the breeze and market stalls are selling video footage of Mandela's release. Preparations for the state visit have been simple: a sound system has been installed on the balcony of Brixton Recreation Centre to pump out reggae music, and a black-and-white banner shouts: "Wozza Nelson Mandela. Welcome Prince Charles".

Pinned up above the entrance to the centre are two giant photographs of Charles and Mandela, the one waving royally, the other punching the sky victoriously. "Two of the most important people in the world," remarked one bystander. "Putting Brixton on the map," added another optimistically.

Although Brixton has virtually become a byword for riot-

ing, Mel Milbourne, 48, manager of the Recreation Centre, is confident that on this occasion people will police themselves. "People are very deeply respectful of Mandela," he said. "The visit," said Tony Davis, 35, "will with a twist of bitterness, remind people that there is a black community in Britain."

"You can possibly think of quite a few others [politicians] from other countries who just go to Downing Street or Buckingham Palace, but won't actually go to the grass roots and meet people," said Charles Aban, a 24-year-old barrister. "I wouldn't expect any less of Mandela ... That's the sort of thing he's been doing all along - going to the townships."

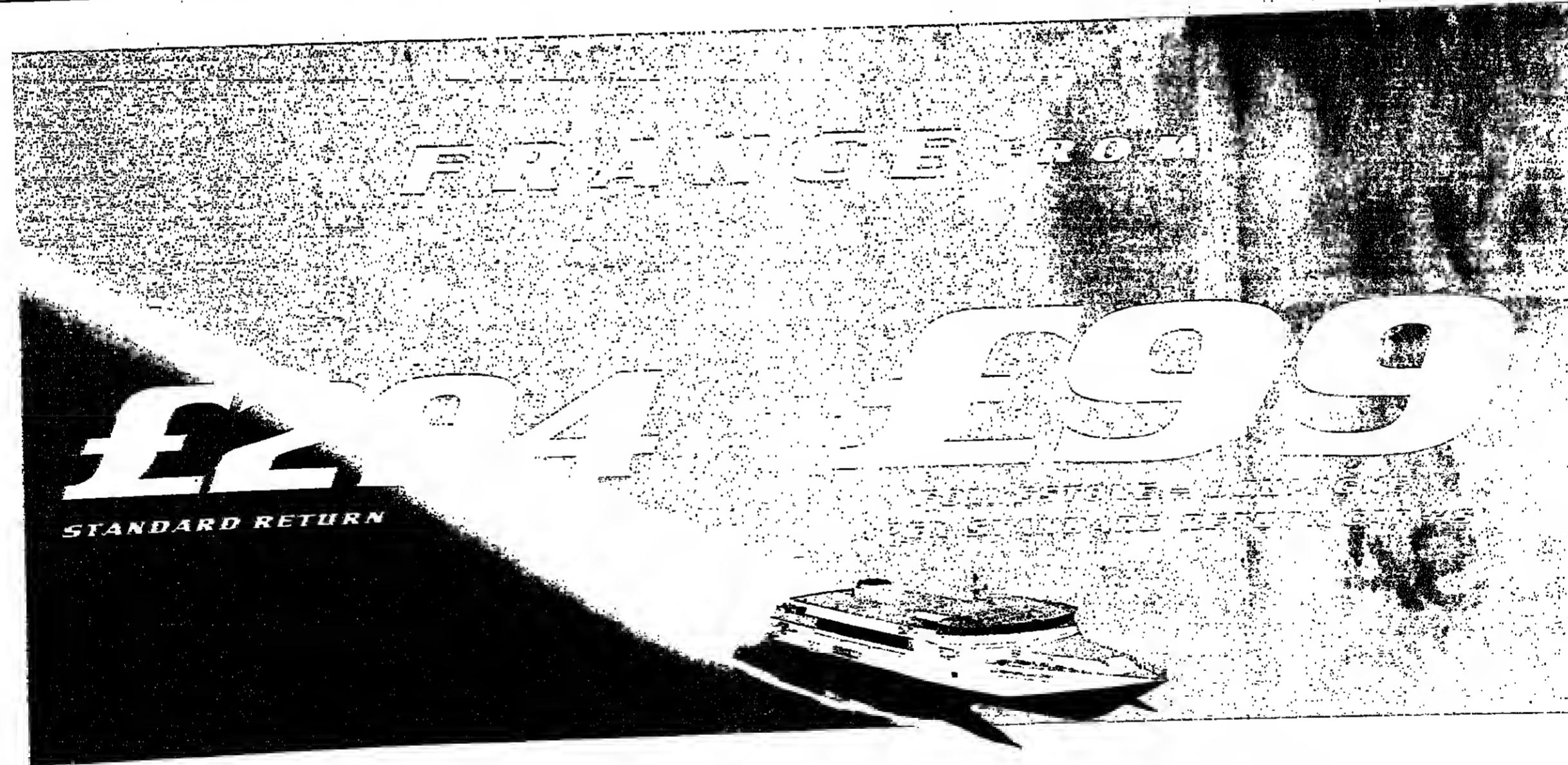
Of course South Africans have it harder than them, the people of Brixton concede. They [South Africans] are going through hardship every day. Some days we have good days, but it seems they never do," said Samantha Thousaint, 18. But despite the "good days" people here feel they need Mandela's example too. To them, he is a symbol of black suffering and how to survive it. "He's saying that we can go on, because if he did, we can as well. Once you're in Brixton you're stereotyped as a bad boy ... You don't get the chance to move out."

Daphne Sinclair, an ambitious 18-year-old who is going to read English and Women's Studies at North London University, will be queuing up to see Mandela. "Racism's there when you walk out of the front door," she said. "We're going through the same sort of thing here, so it means a lot to meet Mandela. I'd like to ask him how he survived it, and what

we could do to bring some changes for Britain."

Standing outside the Bushman Kitchen, soaking up the atmosphere of impending festivities, Cloverin Hibbert, 26, a merchandiser, said: "I wouldn't miss it for the world. His life is a message to us, showing us what you can do if you believe in it strong enough. To me he's bigger than Michael Jackson."

Oscar Romp, 32, is one of a select few chosen by the Prince's Trust to stand on the Recreation Centre balcony alongside Mandela, who has been a "figurehead for humanity" for the artist ever since his student days. Although he has more chance than most to have a word with Mandela, he says he will keep it to just that. "I'll probably say as little as possible. What I most want to say is: 'Thank you'."



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## politics

# Rebuff for Blair as shadow team faces snap poll

JOHN RENTOU  
Political Correspondent

A snap election for Tony Blair's shadow Cabinet in two weeks' time seems almost certain as significant opposition to the proposal failed to materialise in Westminster yesterday.

The move would be a compromise in the stand-off between the Labour leader and his rebellious MPs, but still marks a serious rebuff for Mr Blair. He privately wanted to cancel the annual November "beauty contest", in which all Labour MPs have a vote, because it would be a distraction, tying up his shadow ministerial team in internal canvassing.

But backbenchers - many keen to vote against health spokeswoman Harriet Harman as a punishment for sending her son to a selective school - insisted on exercising one of their few remaining powers. Last week, in a rare flexing of back-bench muscle, more than 100 MPs pledged to attend the weekly meeting of Labour MPs next Wednesday and block any move to cancel the elections.

The idea of an early election

was then floated earlier this week by frontbenchers close to Mr Blair, who claimed there was a "strong push from all quarters of the party". Mr Blair seems to have decided that, if there is to be a contest, it would be better to get it out of the way.

The idea was also backed by left-wingers, for whom it has the advantage of guaranteeing that they have a say.

When an early election was proposed at a Labour MPs meeting two months ago by Paul Flynn, the disaffected MP for Newport West, it was defeated 64-25 by MPs loyal to Mr Blair, who at that time still hoped to drop the elections altogether.

If plans for an early poll were agreed on Wednesday, the elections could be held a week later on 24 July, the last full day of this parliamentary session.

Mr Blair would then be faced with the embarrassment of having to keep Ms Harman in her post if she were voted off the shadow Cabinet, and of Conservative jibes about the "real face of Labour" showing in high votes for traditionalist shadow ministers. Some MPs also regard Jack Straw,

Labour's spokesman for home affairs, as vulnerable over his allegedly "authoritarian" policies, including curfews for children.

Meanwhile, further preparations for a Labour government are unveiled by Tom Sawyer, the party general secretary in an interview today. He proposes widening the membership of the National Executive Committee (NEC), which under past Labour governments was the focus of internal dissent.

"The NEC has a responsibility to support and sustain a Labour government," he tells this week's *New Statesman*. "There can be disagreements, but overall it's important to be supportive ... if we are not, we won't win a second term."

And he rejects the NEC's historic role in making policy: "It is clear that the lead responsibility for the policy and the message will come from the elected leaders."

Mr Blair has not lost a single vote on the NEC in his two years as leader, but he is known to want to avoid it becoming an alternative power centre if Labour wins the election.

On your bike: Ministers want Britain to take to two wheels in the Continental style



In the saddle: The Secretary of State for Transport, Sir George Young, demonstrates the benefits of two wheels in Kensington, west London, following the Government's launch of its pro-cycling policy

Photograph: Keith Dobney

Cycling on the road to a comeback

A strategy to get Britons back on bicycles was announced yesterday by Sir George Young, the Secretary of State for Transport, but with no promise of extra funds, writes Christian Wolmar

The Government, setting its first target for transport, wants to see the proportion of journeys by bicycle doubled by 2002 from its present level of just under 2 per cent, and quadrupled 10 years later. This would mean reversing a trend which has seen the proportion of journeys

ballooned since 1975. The idea is to make Britain more like the Continent. While cycling has been declining in the UK because of government indifference and hostility, in Europe it has grown or stayed steady, accounting for 15 per cent of trips in Switzerland, 18 per cent in Denmark and 27 per cent in Holland.

Sir George, speaking at a conference in London to mark the launch of the strategy, said: "In congested areas, cyclists are completing their journeys more quickly than by car." He said employers should act with local authorities and community groups to boost cycling and that cash allocations to transport schemes would favour councils with cycle-friendly projects.

All DoT funded road schemes will now have to consider the needs of cyclists but new funds are not yet available.

## NHS 'should be fairer to cities'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

Inner-city health authorities should be given millions more at the expense of those in the Home Counties, a cross-party committee of MPs recommended yesterday.

The changes would result from making the formula used to allocate NHS cash fairer, the Commons Health Committee said. It also recommended a reworking of the element in the formula which adjusts for pay and recruitment costs in London and the South-east. A change to that - on which the Department of Health is already working - would have more diverse effects. But it could also benefit some city authorities.

The MPs on the Tory-dominated committee called for the cash shift to inner cities despite its broad effect being to benefit Labour-voting areas at the expense of traditionally Tory ones. Ensuring that patients receive equal treatment for equal need is an important NHS principle, the committee

said. Its call follows a decision by the Department of Health in 1993 not to make any adjustment to allow for differing local needs to the 24 per cent of the hospital budget which covers administration, mental handicap, some community services and other items. That has left deprived inner-city areas worse off to the advantage of more-affluent ones, the MPs say.

The sum used to be adjusted, and should be again from next April, either under the old formula or a newer one suggested by consultants at York University. Under the more radical option, 2 to 3 per cent would be cut off the budgets of a string of Home Counties authorities. East and West Surrey would lose about £20m each. Authorities in Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, West Sussex and parts of Hampshire would lose £1.4m to £1.7m. The biggest gains would be Manchester and Liverpool, with an increase of around 3.5 per cent, or £34m

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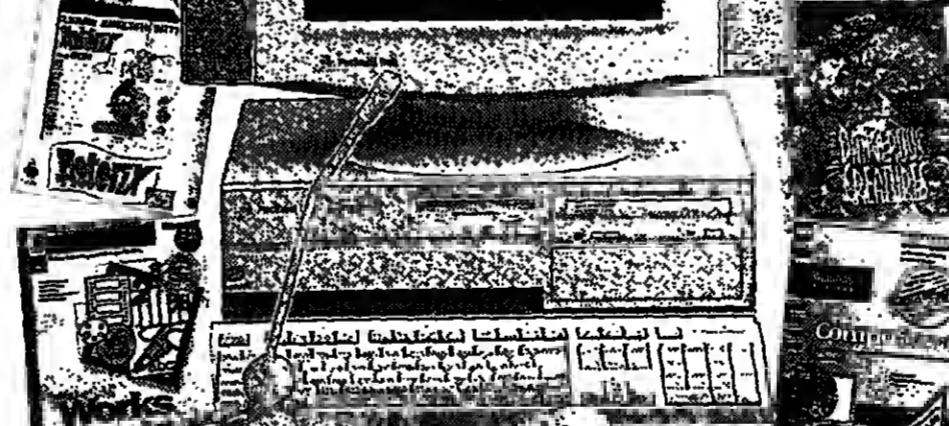
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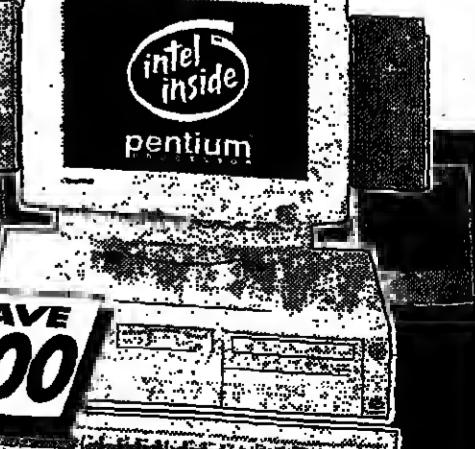
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## the commentators

## Britain's debt to an extraordinary man

In a hemisphere tired and cynical about its politicians, Nelson Mandela has a capacity to thrill every other democratic leader. The crowds which have lined up five-deep to catch a glimpse of the great man are a powerful testimony to that. So too were the staff of Downing Street who lined up to applaud his arrival yesterday - something never known there before.

This has been an emotional visit on both sides, and by the standards of how such events are normally planned, one arranged in a quite a hurry.

I'm told that the Queen, who has a famously warm attachment to Mandela, let it be known quite firmly that the South African President should be urged to come to Britain as soon as possible, after her own visit, rich in historic resonances, to South Africa last year. The result was the arrival within a year of a guest utterly determined to forgive and forget that it was Britain which

After the misguided and crass attacks of the Thatcher years, we owe a great deal to Nelson Mandela

alone among the Commonwealth countries stood out throughout the 1980s against the sanctions which finally toppled apartheid.

As it happens, John Major was never an enthusiastic disciple of Margaret Thatcher's remarkable capacity to underestimate and belittle the African National Congress. It's unlikely that he would ever have made the crass mistake - as he did in the Vancouver Commonwealth Conference battle over sanctions - of comparing Mandela's party with the IRA. This breathtaking comparison of a disenfranchised majority with a minority of a minority could only lend a spurious dignity to the IRA leadership.

The most significant act of Major's short stint as Foreign Secretary was trying to extricate Britain from the confrontation which Thatcher had persistently tried to

engineer with the rest of the Commonwealth over South Africa.

In lengthy late-night negotiations at the 1989 Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Conference, Major defused the explosive South Africa issue and a communiqué was produced which registered points of British disagreement but nevertheless sounded a significantly more united note than at any time since 1979.

Talking off the record the following morning a relaxed Major went out of his way to emphasise the new accord, and the government's common determination to hasten the end of apartheid. Twenty-four hours later his warm words were brutally and humiliatingly obliterated by a typically stolid Thatcher attack on the majority support for sanctions. Major has since told his authorised biographer, Penny Junor, that he was in total agreement with the

Nor is it surprising that Mandela should be so gracious about all this now. Even Thatcher was deeply struck by his nobility of bearing and utter lack of bitterness when she met him in London in 1990. But this didn't stop her from claiming that on economics Mandela was stuck in a 1940s "socialist time-warp."

But there is no sign that Major, who was at yesterday's CBI conference with Mandela, shares that view. Nor, more to the point, do the industrialists and bankers who turned up in such numbers that the conference had to be switched to a bigger venue.

And this is the rub. The visit is not symbolic; it is of central economic importance to the new South Africa. Mandela desperately needs new investment for the economic growth the country needs to begin to satisfy the aspirations of those

who so resoundingly swept him to power. Britain is the base for half the largest employers in South Africa and is already its largest investor by far.

The hard-headed businessmen who met him yesterday are worried about the pace of privatisation of the big state corporations; about the stability of a succession which he has already sought to bequeath to Thabo Mbeki; about crime, and about the exchange control which Mr Mandela has so far been forced to maintain to stave off a flight of capital.

There are Tory consultants here who worked on the National Party campaign against Mandela, and not just because around one million of its people would have the right to live here. If the country started to disintegrate, No British government should ever forget the huge debt it owes this extraordinary man for the peaceful transition to democracy.



DONALD MACINTYRE

Thatcher statement. That was scarcely credible then, and isn't now.

Thatcher's attitudes to Southern Africa weren't always simple. She was, finally and reluctantly, edged at the end of her premiership away from her stubborn faith in Chief Buthelezi by her able and imaginative Pretoria ambassador, Robin Renwick. It was Renwick who had the courage to convince her of the importance of Mandela and the ANC.

## If there's too much soap, it won't wash



BRYAN APPLEYARD

The desperate search for ratings has provoked soap fever. ITV is in a state bordering on panic

**O**n Tuesday lunchtime, Fisher tried to justify telling everyone about Chloe's drug problem and Mal confronted Sonny about his love life. That evening, Scott was dismayed by Kelly's infatuation with Marcus and Bianca learnt some unappealing facts about Simon. Rumours about Mark were spreading like wildfire. It was just another day in soapsland.

Television is foaming with soaps as never before. *Home and Away*, *Neighbours*, *Emmerdale* and *EastEnders* - from which the above plot lines are taken - plus *Brookside*, *Coronation Street* and *Heartbreak High* dominate rather than punctuate the schedules. ITV is launching a fourth episode of *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale* is being promoted to three times a week. Meanwhile, the BBC is to run a fourth episode of *EastEnders* during the Olympic Games - a fine demonstration of cultural awareness, for soaps are the exact opposite of sport.

In terms of the state of the television industry, what we have here is desperation. ITV is in a state bordering on panic. Ratings are poor, Channel 5 is looming, as is Rupert Murdoch's mega-channel black box. Nothing seems to work. Movies no longer pull in the audiences; neither do the endless supply of

American mini-series. New ideas are non-existent and the BBC is competing more commercially than ever.

Soaps are, for the moment, the only solution. So, furiously milking audience loyalties, the ITV network increases episodes, strains plot lines and exhausts stars. An excessively ratings-conscious BBC responds, and the soaps flood the schedules.

Canute-like before this tide, the Broadcasting Standards Council has complained about the excess of adolescent sex, primarily in the Australian soaps. Accepting that the dramatisation of sexual relationships "can be helpful" to adolescents, the BSC then says that recent portrayals have been "taken beyond acceptable limits".

Note that "can be helpful" line. It represents a shrewd acknowledgement of the most high-minded justification of soaps - that they help people by dramatising the conflicts and traumas of ordinary life. Like great art, they objectify the objective; and, thanks to television, they do so for the masses.

Soaps at their best distil and externalise simple emotional truths of life and death, love and loss. And, in the case of *Coronation Street*, this is done without condescension and with extraordinarily consistent wit and style.

Nobody who has found themselves following the love life of that epicly wide-eyed sex bomb

Raquel can doubt the capacity of soaps to be both funny and true. Raquel is larger than life, but she is not alien to it.

*Coronation Street* achieves the synthesis to which all soaps aspire: the convincing union of realism and stylised exaggeration. Soaps almost all use banal settings, "ordinary" people and familiar crises. But they cannot take their realism any further or they would be unwatchable. In real life, nothing much happens most of the time; and when it does, it seldom forms itself into satisfactorily rounded story lines. So soaps impose various forms of exaggeration.

In *Coronation Street*, this is primarily done with language and character - the average northerner does not really speak as literally, as rhythmically as they do on *The Street* and, though northern women are admittedly a breed apart, few actually attain the mythic greatness of Ena Sharples. Bet Lynch or Raquel.

But the cheaper, easier way to exaggerate is through incident. And here, the ghastly *Brookside* is the worst offender. I know this Close is in Liverpool, but even so ... are we really expected to believe its appalling catalogue of ill-fortune? Crime, incest, terrorism, drugs, cults, they all sweep before the glazed, shell-shocked eyes of its wretched, dull, characterless, illiterate inhabitants. Amityville, Elm Street and the

require story lines devised to provide a cliffhanger to get people through to Monday. Even the writing resources allocated to that show can scarcely be expected to fulfil that hope without resorting to the pornography of incident.

If British television wants to go on being taken seriously, it should devote more craft, energy and creativity to soaps than to anything else. Unfortunately, the present fever suggests that it only intends to devote more money.

### JOHN WALSH'S DIARY

Who got the Creativity Prize, I asked the beer-swilling Buddha ...

"Do come along," they said. "You like awards ceremonies, don't you?" Well, of course, I replied, but it's not exactly the Booker Prize, is it? "Well that's where you're wrong, smart alec," they riposted. "It's the music industry's Booker." I thought that was the Brit Awards, I said innocently. "Ha!" they cried, "Ha Ha! Where have you been for the last century?" But, I whined, I shall feel like a koi carp in a septic tank. "Nonsense," they said. "Be yourself - well OK, perhaps a simple nose-ring or tongue-stud accessory - and everything'll be fine." And that is how I came to be at the *Kerrang!* awards on Monday evening.

*Kerrang!*, need I say, is the excitable weekly magazine for rock fans whose tastes are for something more, um, basic than the art-school subtleties of Blur and Co. Its pages are full of gormless head-bangers looking scornfully at the camera or bragging about their willingness to vomit on their drummer's head at 30,000 feet (and then eat it). Each issue features the same bands names endlessly recurring, a curious litany reminiscent of dubious cocktails (White Zombie, Kula Shaker, Skunk Anansie) or maudlin Victorian parlour verse (My Dying Bride, Send No Flowers, The Blood Divine). So did the awards ceremony.

At the bar, tequila-and-cranberry drinks were handed out by strange people with completely scarlet faces, like a Paul John-

son wannabe contest. Tall Elvis impersonators in Las Vegas jumpsuits charted to fat young men in ponytails, ankle-socks and murderous expressions.

We drifted in to dinner at 4.30pm - but there wasn't the usual arty display of lead crystal goblets and prawn starters. There were no knives and forks, floral centrepiece or damask napery. Instead, every table groaned under cauldrons of beer on ice, bottles of *Kerrang!* wine, litres of Jack Daniels, coddles of vodka.

Beside me sat a chap last seen in that surreal tyre advertisement - you know, the vast Buddha figure - wearing wrap-around shades and swigging Carlsberg. The awards began. A wall-mounted video played frantic images of skulls, babies, disintegrating heads, industrial wastelands and hairy faces in mimentary close-up going WHOOAAAAAA!! (only louder) at the camera.

Some of the awards puzzled. "Who's the chap that got the Creativity Prize?", I asked the beer-swilling Buddha. "Butch Vig, out of Garbage," he replied witheringly, as if it had gone to Igor Stravinsky. I imagined the Classic Songwriter award would be a natural for Joni Mitchell or Paul Simon; when it went to Alice in Chains (authors of the deeply classic "Grind", "Rooster" and "Them Bones"), I thought of shouting "Fix!" but decided not.

One by one, huge track-driver types in ponytails lurch up to the stage, accompanied by

hulking baldies emblazoned with tattoos on head and neck. The curious thing was, unlike their berserk video-screen presence, they were mostly wreathed in smiles, even the ones who came second-best. The place looked like a ballroom full of boozers on Ecstasy. Mind you, if Michael Jackson had chosen to try his white-robed Messiah routine there, I would have feared for his safety.

The biggest cheer was, a little unexpectedly, for Lionel Blair, the boozed-up and smiling hoover, who gave an award to the Terrorvision ensemble. "My son's a huge fan," he told me. "He wanted me to take him to see them play at the HMV shop, so I rang up to see if I'd be welcome. They said, only on condition you give the band the award this evening" ("That's the best thing about being a rock star," observed Mark Yates from Terrorvision, "You

get to meet people like Lionel").

There's nothing as sentimental,

apparently, as a sentimental headbanger).

"So here it is at last, the distinguished thing," murmured Henry James just before he died. The anthologies of literary *obiter dicta* are full of deathbed sign-offs in varying shades of pretension and pathos. One thinks of Oscar Wilde's alleged parting shot, "Either this wallpaper goes or I do," or the Great War chap whose last observation was "Don't worry, they couldn't hit an elephant at this dist".

But don't you feel there's been a slight falling-off lately in the quality of Famous Last Words? Learning that Timothy Leary, the turn-on-tune-in acid visionary, greeted the prospect of eternity with the words "Great - why not?", one thinks of Henry James and sighs. And what does one make of Donald

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# 20 business

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BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171 293 2636 fax 0171 293 2898

Nuclear sell-off blow: Power stations taken out of operation to look for weld cracks hours after the public share offer closes

## British Energy shuts two reactors

PATRICK TOOHER

The risks of investing in nuclear privatisation were highlighted yesterday when, only hours after the public offer to buy shares in British Energy had closed, the company confirmed it had shut down two more reactors.

The shutdowns at Hinkley B and Hunterston B – to look for weld cracks – mean two of the eight nuclear power stations being sold off are now out of operation just as the controversial privatisation process, hinted in television advertisements as a final, athletic burst of energy, dips for the finishing line.

News of the shutdowns could not have come at a more embarrassing time for British Energy. Over 520,000 applications for shares in the company had been received by the time the offer closed at noon yesterday.

With the retail offer over twice subscribed, the amount of shares being made available to

private investors will be increased substantially above the 30 per cent already set aside. Institutional investors have until tomorrow to decide how much to bid for British Energy.

The sell-off is expected to raise between £1.26bn and £1.96bn for the Treasury – less than the £2.6bn it cost to build the Sizewell B pressurised water reactor (PWR), the most modern nuclear station being privatised.

British Energy denied that news of the additional shutdowns had been deliberately kept back until the deadline for private investors to subscribe had passed. "There was every intention that the announcement was going to be made today," a spokesman said. "It's a purely a precautionary measure. There are no safety implications."

However, environmental pressure group Friends of the Earth seized on news of the shutdowns to renew its attack



Hunterston: The shutdowns there and at Hinkley mean four reactors are now out of action over possible weld cracks

on the privatisation. "The AGRs [advanced gas cooled reactors] have an appalling history of technical problems," a spokeswoman said. "They are meant to be the cash cows generating dividends for investors, but it doesn't look like that now. It also raises questions not only about public safety but also British Energy's ability to meet the enormous radioactive waste liabilities."

All four reactors, two at Hunterston B and two at Hinkley B, are now out of action following statutory shutdowns for weld inspections at two of the reactors which began last month.

British Energy indicated that the timing of the decision to shut down the reactors was a commercial one. "The inspection programme and, if necessary, any weld repairs, will therefore be undertaken during the summer season when electricity demand and prices are lower."

The company added that the additional work will result in some output loss but said contingency plans had already been made.

The British Energy prospectsus listed the main technical issues affecting AGRs as reheat cracking, carbon deposition and graphite core integrity.

The latest shutdowns relate to the formation of cracks in welds which are subjected to high temperatures.

To date, the prospectsus states, "reheat cracking has been found at Heysham 1,

Hartlepool, Dungeness B and Hunterston B". It adds that no signs of reheat cracking were found at Hinkley B.

According to the prospectsus, the reheat crack at Hunterston B will cost about £3.7m to replace, excluding lost output.

Only the most modern nuclear power stations – the seven AGRs and Sizewell B – are being sold off. The older Magnox stations will remain in the government's hands.

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## Nuclear sites still subject to same inspectors

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Science Editor

Joining the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate is probably the best guarantee there is of a job for life – or longer. "We still visit sites which have shut down their reactors but are in the process of decommissioning them," said a spokesman yesterday. "The NII can and will check the site until it poses no radiological threat. That can take up to 135 years."

The 160 inspectors and 10 support staff of the NII (which is part of the Health and Safety Executive) take their long-lasting task very seriously. With 41 generating reactors and a host of other sites – such as British Nuclear Fuels reprocessing plant at Sellafield, and the Royal Navy's nuclear submarine repair docks at Rosyth and Devonport – there is no shortage of work. The prime concern is the safe operation of the sites, to minimise the risk to workers and the rest of the population.

Though inspectors can demand the immediate shutdown of a reactor or site, they usually wait for that big stick at site operators while speaking softly to them about the advantages of making that decision themselves. British Energy's unpublicised stoppage at two of its stations was not done directly at the NII's request. But it is clear that if the work now being carried out had gone undone, the NII would have been forceful.

The inspectorate has shown its willingness to prosecute site operators. BNFL has been fined repeatedly for excessive discharges and violating safety rules. And last September, Nuclear Electric was fined £250,000, with £158,000 costs for an incident at the Wyfa Magnox power station [which is not included in the privatisation] in Anglesey. Staff there took nine hours to shut down the reactor following an accident to its coolant system.

"It think it was sufficient to stigmatise the industry into taking very good note of the implications," said Bill Ross, deputy chief inspector of the NII, afterwards.

And attitudes among inspectors will not be changed by privatisation, said a spokesman: "It's not a question of attitude, anyway," he said. "It's about standards."

## Air inquiry begins with fireworks

MICHAEL HARRISON

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic last night clashed before a committee of MPs after Richard Branson accused its rival carrier of using "emotional blackmail" in a bid to gain approval for its controversial alliance with American Airlines.

The charge followed a warning from BA that unless the tie-up was approved without strings then the UK would pull out of talks aimed at creating an open skies deal across the Atlantic.

Appearing before the Commons Transport Select Committee, the Virgin chairman said that if the link-up was allowed to proceed it would kill competition and mar a return to the bad old days of state-protected monopolies.

However, BA chief executive Robert Ayling, who gave evidence earlier, dismissed Mr



At odds: BA's Robert Ayling and Virgin's Richard Branson BA-American Airlines link

Branson's claims as "myths", insisting that the link-up would be more competition, lower fares and a better deal for travellers.

Mr Ayling also rejected any suggestion that BA and American should be required to give up precious take-off and landing slots at Heathrow as the

price of regulatory approval for the alliance or offer any other concessions.

However, claiming that the alliance would control 60 per cent of the transatlantic market and 100 per cent of passengers on some UK-US routes, Mr Branson said: "Any appeal by

BA that it needs to enhance its already monopolistic position to compete on the world stage is pure emotional blackmail. As it is BA already has monopoly power on the North Atlantic. With American Airlines it will simply kill competition."

In its evidence to MPs, BA argued strongly, however, that the real market place was between Europe and the US. On that basis, the alliance would account for only 24 per cent of passengers between the UK and US since more than half its traffic was from outside the UK.

BA and Britain, Mr Ayling added, risked losing out to foreign airlines and airports in Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Paris, jeopardising a business that employed 50,000 people and had contributed £9bn to the balance of payments in the last five years.

If the alliance with BA did not

take place other airlines such as Air France were waiting to step in and take American's hand.

"We are not the only bride in town," said Mr Ayling.

But Mr Branson rejected BA's claims, saying: "The question here is not whether our aviation industry is to be allowed to continue to play in the first division by further globalisation of BA. It is whether our industry is to be allowed to slip back into the the bottom division characterised by state protection, monopolies and cartels."

The inquiry is just one of four probes into the BA-American alliance. The Office of Fair Trading in this country and the US Justice Department are also investigating a business that employed 50,000 people and had contributed £9bn to the balance of payments in the last five years.

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Comment, page 21

## City's overseas earnings help trade gap narrow by £20bn

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Editor

The City of London's overseas earnings set a record last year, contributing more than £20bn to Britain's balance of payments.

Financial services rescued the balance of payments from being heavily in the red and accounted for almost all of the overseas surplus in private sector services.

Banks and insurance, including Lloyd's of London, were the biggest contributors in 1995, although pension fund earnings grew rapidly. The total financial sector earnings of £20.4bn were up from £18.8bn in 1994, and more than double the surplus a decade ago.

Yesterday's figures, published by British Invisibles, follow the recent decision to present trade

in services more prominently in official balance of payments statistics. Exports of services were only about a third as big as exports of goods last year, but services generated a surplus of more than £6bn compared with the deficit of nearly £1.2bn in trade in goods and an overall balance of payments deficit of just under £3bn.

The news coincided with an announcement by Howard Davies, deputy governor of the Bank of England, that the Bank intends to improve its collection of information about the service sector of the economy. It will ask its regional agents to monitor spending in restaurants and hotels and will support a new nationwide survey on services, to be published for the first time in the autumn.

The Bank has been con-

cerned that existing statistics do not provide enough information about services, which make up two-thirds of the economy and have recently been growing significantly faster than industry.

Welcoming yesterday's figures, Alison Wright, director general of British Invisibles, said: "These results reflect well on London's continuing role as a leading international financial centre." They showed the financial sector was essential to the UK's competitiveness, she said.

Service earnings accounted for nearly two-thirds of the City surplus last year, at £12.2bn. The rest consisted of investment income of £8.2bn. Both were £0.5bn higher than in 1994.

Banking and insurance provided the bulk of the earnings, with contributions of £6.2bn and £6.0bn respectively.

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## Oftel to visit BT 'dirty tricks' marketing centre

MATTHEW HORSMAN  
Media Editor

Oftel, the telecoms regulator, will visit the BT telemarketing centre in Scotland tomorrow or early next week, as part of its investigation into allegations by cable companies that the dominant telecoms operator has mounted a "dirty tricks" campaign to win back cable telephone subscribers.

The visit to the Win Back centre in Glasgow, at the invitation of BT, follows further allegations by cable companies that BT has been calling ex-directory cable customers, in breach of the Communications Act.

As revealed by the *Independent* yesterday, a further seven complaints have been forwarded by cable operators to Oftel, of which five were passed on yesterday to BT.

The telecoms giant is expected to respond to the latest charges by the end of today, and Oftel is expected to make

a formal statement early next week.

The allegations concern what the cable operators believe is an illegal campaign to stanch the loss of BT customers to cable, involving the direct telemarketing of ex-directory cable customers.

Cable operators have privately rejected BT's initial explanation that a "computer glitch" was at fault.

Bob Frost, chief executive of the Cable Communications Association, said last night: "We're extremely concerned about further reports that we are receiving and are anxious to hear the reply that we are going to get from BT."

A BT spokesman continued to claim last night that "all confidential information that BT has is held in a separate data base. Our marketers do not have access to that."

He added that there had been no evidence the "wall had been breached".

## Nadir sister's SFO case rejected

PETER RODGERS  
Financial Editor

A judge has thrown out a £1m legal action against the Serious Fraud Office by Blige Navrat, the sister of Asil Nadir who sued last year for wrongful arrest and false imprisonment.

The case was struck out in the High Court on the grounds that the actions of the Metropolitan police officers concerned were the responsibility of their commissioner, not the SFO.

Mrs Navrat was arrested in connection with allegations – later withdrawn – that she was involved in a plot to bribe Mr Justice Tucker, the judge handling her brother's trial. Peter Krivinskas, Mrs Navrat's solicitor, said yesterday that an appeal against the decision to strike out the case had been lodged in the High Court on Tuesday.

He said: "It is important for the SFO to be held accountable for people working under its direction. If what they say is right, the SFO can never be held

accountable for its actions. The law has not caught up with the creation of the SFO."

The case was struck out because existing legislation, which Mr Krivinskas said came into force before the SFO came into existence, states that only a chief constable or the Metropolitan

Police Commissioner can be sued for his officers' actions.

But the officers who arrested Mrs Navrat were working for the SFO, where all the files on the case were kept. "They have the files in their building and the Metropolitan police have no files on it."

Police Commissioner can be sued for his officers' actions.

But the officers who arrested Mrs Navrat were working for the SFO, where all the files on the case were kept. "They have the files in their building and the Metropolitan police have no files on it."

Mrs Krivinskas confirmed that Mrs Navrat's total claim was likely to be in the region of £1m. A parallel lawsuit against the Metropolitan Police for wrongful arrest and false imprisonment has not been ruled out.

Mr Krivinskas said that after the arrest Mrs Navrat had been questioned for two to three minutes about police inquiries into assets that Mr Nadir had supposedly been hiding from his trustees in bankruptcy. But the rest of the questioning was all about the bribery allegations, which was clearly the reason behind her detention.

The SFO made clear this week in its annual report that it had not dropped its intention to prosecute Mr Nadir if he "returned or is returned" to the jurisdiction from northern Cyprus.

In April, Elizabeth Forsyth, who worked for Mr Nadir, was jailed for five years after being found guilty on two counts of dishonestly handling stolen money from Poly Peck International.

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## COMMENT

'Cut through the smooth-talking banter of BA's transatlantic argument, and you find a proposal which is fundamentally anti-competitive and monopolistic. *Prima facie*, this deal should not be allowed'

## BA plays national card in transatlantic battle

Robert Ayling, chairman of British Airways, has two battles on his hands right now - one with his pilots over pay and conditions, the other with the competition authorities over BA's proposed link with American Airlines. The two issues are not as unrelated as might be imagined.

On the one hand Mr Ayling wants his pilots and other employees to start living in the real world of flexible, insecure, rate-for-the-job employment; on the other he wants to bolster and consolidate BA's monopoly position on transatlantic air travel, a monopoly which helps explain why it is still possible in an age when such things are meant to be a dim and distant memory for BA's flight staff to hold their company and the air travelling public in ransom.

Cut through the smooth-talking banter of BA's transatlantic argument, and you find a proposal which is fundamentally anti-competitive and monopolistic. *Prima facie*, this deal should not be allowed. Combined, the two airlines will have something like 80 per cent of prime time flights between Heathrow and North America. Once the market power of two of the world's most extensive reservation systems is taken into account, the monopoly becomes a gilt-edged guarantee. And finally, the whole thing is underwritten for all time by the frequent-flier programmes.

As Mr Ayling told MPs on the Commons Transport Select Committee yesterday, there are reasonably powerful counter arguments.

The first is that code sharing can actually be competition enhancing if combined with an open skies policy, as proposed in this case. The second is our old friend, the national card. If you don't allow us to do this, BA says, you will put one of Britain's most successful companies at a competitive disadvantage to rival flag carriers with more amenable governments.

The first argument can easily be dispensed with. An open-skies policy is hardly worth the paper it is written on as long as British Airways retains control of Heathrow, which it does by dominating the landing right schedules, or slot. It doesn't matter how many airlines come forward to compete on these routes, they will not be able to without the right slots. The obvious remedy here would be for BA to give up a proportion of its slots to domestic and foreign competition, but for BA the level of slot-stripping required would probably prove a deal breaker.

On to the national card. Other European airlines, notably Lufthansa and KLM, have already set up code sharing deals with American counterparts. If they can offer the advantages of seamless travel to American and European passengers but BA is blocked, it will not be long before lucrative transatlantic business starts to gravitate to Lufthansa, KLM and others. Traffic will move out of Heathrow and towards Frankfurt and Schiphol, BA warns.

Well maybe, maybe not. In the end pas-

sengers will choose those offering the best service and prices. You don't need code sharing to provide seamless travel these days - anything can do it.

BA likes to quote Jorgen Weber, chairman of Lufthansa, in support of its case. Pointing out that Lufthansa had just become part of the biggest airline alliance in the world, he said that this would enable the company to maintain its leading role in the airline industry and "is therefore a key factor in safeguarding the value of Lufthansa shares". But just because Germany finds it acceptable to sacrifice the interests of consumers to those of shareholders, does that mean Britain should too?

The best thing that could happen is for the European Commission, which is now investigating all these code-sharing arrangements, to ban the lot. But it's hardly going to do that given that the Lufthansa one is already up and running with the full blessing of the Germany authorities. The alternative is the one proposed earlier - that BA be stripped of a proportion of its slots. But since when has a monopoly willingly traded market share?

Timing is all in the case of price sensitive information, and that is why British

Energy's decision to start the closure of two reactors late on Tuesday night should raise eyebrows. This was less than a day ahead of another rather important closure date, of the offer to private investors of shares in the company.

British Energy and its advisers could fairly point out that there is a section in the prospectus about weld cracks, which mentions in some detail the work at Hunterston B and elsewhere, though not on the additional reactor closures on Tuesday. Furthermore, they could say in all fairness that the price of the shares is not set by private investors but by the book-building exercise among institutions which ends on Friday night.

If the closures, to inspect for more weld cracks, prove to be price sensitive, institutions have time to think about it and adjust their offers. The likelihood is that they will judge that nothing has changed.

But whatever the institutions think about the crack problem as they pull it over, the fact is that private investors who have lodged their cheques are tied to the institutions' costs on price, and cannot now withdraw.

British Energy should have told them before now yesterday, not made the announcement hours afterwards.

Do the additional closures really matter?

British Energy and its advisers did a clever job last year of steering the City debate about the company's value away from what might be called traditional nuclear risks such as melt-downs, decommissioning costs and waste dis-

posal. The investment debate centred instead on three areas familiar to any operator of large electrical plant: station operating lives, the price of electricity in the pool and the technical limits of output.

Of these, most people thought that the possibility of a collapse in the pool price of electricity was the worst risk, and this may explain a substantial part of the fall in the expected value of British Energy. There was rather less questioning about load factors, even though these are vital to the economics of nuclear power, which must run as near flat out as possible to make money.

BZW, advisers on the flotation, assumed load factor would rise very sharply indeed, by nearly 10 percentage points from last year's 75 per cent, as the new Sizewell station came on stream and improvements were made to the refuelling of the older advanced gas cooled reactors. A five percentage point variation in load factor changes the company's valuation by as much as £700m. It so happens that throughout their lives, the AGRs have had a constant history of minor technical problems that have affected output.

In the short term, the shares have been priced to sell, and there may be a quick profit to be made. Owning British Energy shares as a long-term investment is rather different: it will require great faith in the company's ability to keep these ramshackle power stations on line at high output for another 10 to 20 years. The search for more weld cracks is a timely reminder of this risk.

## Sky deal may flag digital broadcasts of Formula One

MATHEW HORSMAN  
Media Editor

BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster, is in talks with Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One rights holder, about launching digital television coverage of top-level auto racing in the UK starting in 1997.

The discussions are the first fruit of BSkyB's high-profile alliance with Kirch Group, which plans to launch a Formula One service in Germany and other European countries next month, as part of a deal negotiated before BSkyB agreed this week to help fund the launch of Kirch's digital television.

## Final bids go in for MGM auction

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

The long-running auction for Metro Goldwyn Mayer is at last coming to a climax as bidders prepare to submit their last-word offers for the once-legendary Hollywood studio in New York before a deadline of 2pm today. The winning contender could be chosen as early as next week.

Lazard Frères, which is bidding the sale for the studio's current French owner, Credit Lyonnais, earlier this week asked the three bidders still remaining in the race to improve on their previous bids. Credit Lyonnais had been hoping to raise a minimum of £1.5bn-£2bn (£297m-£1.3bn).

The contest is believed to have been narrowed down to PolyGram, the music and film unit of Philips, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, and Los Angeles-based Morgan Creek Productions. Analysts did not expect any of them to increase their bids as high as \$1.5bn, however.

sign platform in Germany. If successful, the negotiations would see Formula One broadcasts on BSkyB's planned UK digital service, with up to six channels offering different camera angles - from the pit, the grandstand and the dashboards of leading drivers.

Meanwhile, Kirch yesterday confirmed that it intended to seal the alliance with Mr Murdoch by taking an equity stake in BSkyB. Speculation grew that it could approach BSB Holdings, the rump of former shareholders in British Satellite Broadcasting, which merged with Sky Television in 1990.

BSB, which holds a 17 per

cent stake in BSkyB, groups Pearson, Granada, Pathé and a handful of smaller shareholders.

However, Granada has already made it clear that it does not intend to sell its shareholding, which totals about 11 per cent of BSkyB, and is likely to spurn any approach from Kirch.

Other options believed to be under consideration at Kirch include an equity swap between Rupert Murdoch, BSkyB's 40 per cent owner, and Teleplus, the Italian pay-TV company in which Kirch holds 35 per cent, or even a direct sale by Mr Murdoch of part of his stake.

A new issue of shares, to help fund the roll-out of digital television in the UK, could also give Mr Kirch an opportunity to take a position.

News of Mr Kirch's intentions sent BSkyB's shares 5p higher to close at 473, valuing the company at just over £8bn. The shares had risen 14p on Tuesday, on news that BSkyB would take an equity stake of up to 49 per cent in Kirch's German company.

The swirling rumours surrounding the Kirch-BSkyB relationship helped fuel talk of further jockeying in the pay-TV market in Europe.

Bertelsmann, now a pay-TV rival, had been blamed by Mr Murdoch for the collapse of an earlier pan-European alliance that also included Havas and Canal Plus, the French digital television market leader. Bertelsmann is vowed to continue to develop its digital plans in league with CLT, the Luxembourg broadcaster whose television subsidiary was recently merged with Bertelsmann's own television operators.

That leaves Canal Plus without a partner, and industry sources predicted last night that the French group could join the Murdoch-Kirch alliance.

"If both alliances press ahead, there is going to be a bloodbath," Anthony de Larminat, analyst at Panmure Gordon, said.

Morgan Creek was thought to be more likely than the other two to respond to the plea for an improved bid. Days ago it secured \$1bn in financing from Chase Manhattan Bank and may be in position to go to around \$1.4bn. It was thought likely that both News Corp and PolyGram would stick close to their original offers of closer to \$1.1bn.

## Pru calls for pensions overhaul

NIC CICUTTI

Prudential, the UK's largest insurer, yesterday called for a total overhaul of Britain's pension system, including the removal of all tax limits on contributions by individuals and employers.

The company said its proposals were aimed at simplifying the UK's pension system, whether private or occupational, maximising incentives to save and helping ensure that people were able to retire without fear of financial hardship.

"If we can achieve this level of simplicity and make more people understand the need for adequate pension provision, then they will be better able to make an informed decision about their retirement needs."

Among the ideas put forward in the report is that all adults should be free to contribute to approved pensions irrespective of whether they are in work or how much they earn. Contributions from any legitimate source, including legacies or one spouse contributing towards an

unemployed partner's pension, would be allowed.

The Pru also proposes that, if a cap is imposed on a maximum that can be paid, it should be set at £6,000 a year. There should be full "carry-forward" so that a total of £240,000 - at today's prices - could be contributed at any point in a person's average 40-year working life.

Existing benefit limits of two-thirds' full pay for occupational pensions should also be removed.

## EU proposals call for lower referral thresholds



Cartel buster: Karel Van Miert's plans for wider competition powers may anger Germany

## Brussels aims to widen net to vet more mergers

KATHERINE BUTLER  
Brussels

The European Commission tabled controversial proposals yesterday which would allow it to vet more mergers. The competition commissioner, Karel Van Miert, also proposed that companies that help the Commission to bust cartels by blowing the whistle on price-fixing, or other illegal activities, be rewarded with reduced or suspended fines.

The move to draw more mergers and takeovers into the Brussels net enjoys strong backing from industry, but is expected to run into tough opposition from governments who must approve the plans. Germany, in particular, rejects any extension in the competition powers of the Commission and

others are expected to baulk at surrendering significant ground in such a sensitive area.

Mr Van Miert has complained repeatedly that many corporate agreements with Europe-wide impact in key sectors are escaping proper scrutiny because the thresholds for referral are too high. His plan hinges on lowering the financial thresholds which trigger Commission involvement.

Crucially, he is also proposing that Brussels be given automatic power to rule on link-ups that require clearance by three or more national competition authorities.

This is described by officials as a "fall-back position" in the event that ministers reject the lower thresholds.

Under the 1989 EU merger regulation, the Commission's involvement is limited to deals involving combined global

turnover of 5bn ecus (£4bn), where the combined turnover of at least two of the merging companies is 250m ecus inside the EU.

The proposal is to lower these thresholds to 3bn ecus and 150m ecus respectively.

For mergers involving three or more competition authorities the thresholds would be lowered to 2bn ecus for total world-wide turnover and 100m ecus for turnover within the EU.

A spokesman denied the plan amounted to a demand for more powers. Instead it would provide companies with a "one-stop shop", alleviating the burden of multiple notifications; offer a quicker response rate, and greater legal security. Critics, however, suggest that the Commission's merger taskforce would be unable to cope with the big increase in numbers of referrals.

Managers in smaller businesses received bigger pay rises than their counterparts in large organisations, according to a survey published by the Institute of Management and Remuneration Economics. Managers in companies with turnover of less than £40m enjoyed a 5.2 per cent rise in earnings, compared with a managerial average of 4.7 per cent in the year to January.

## IN BRIEF

• The High Court has dismissed Vodafone Group's action against Orange Personal Communications Services, part of Orange, for malicious falsehood and infringement of trade mark. Vodafone brought the action over Orange's autumn 1995 advertising campaign which focused on the theme of "on average, Orange users save £20 per month" when compared with Vodafone equivalent tariffs. The High Court decision rejects Vodafone's allegation that the claims Orange made in the campaign were false and vindicates Orange's decision to carry on the campaign after Vodafone initiated its lawsuit, said a spokesman for Orange. The judge ordered Vodafone to pay Orange's costs.

• Almost half of small businesses are relaxed about the prospect of a national minimum wage, according to a survey by Reed Personnel Services. It asked 249 companies with fewer than 100 employees whether they thought a minimum wage was a good or bad idea, and found 48 per cent in favour compared with 25 per cent against. Across all sizes of firms, 55 per cent said they were in favour of a regional minimum wage. Stephen Almright of the Federation of Small Businesses said there was "a bit of compassion coming back." He added: "Although small businesses are against the principle of an inflexible wage floor, many want to see about £4 an hour go to the lowest paid provided they could not be undercut by cowboy operators."

• Prudential Corporation has signed heads of agreement to sell Prudential Leven, its life insurance business in the Netherlands, to Dutch insurer Achmea Group for an undisclosed sum. The net assets to be disposed of amount to £24m. Prudential Leven contributed £95m of premiums (1 per cent of the group total) and £4m profits (less than 1 per cent of the group total) in 1995.

• Professor Stephen Littlechild, director general of electricity regulator Ofgem, said £1.105bn was raised through the fossil fuel levy in 1995/96. The money was collected from licensed electricity suppliers from their revenues for supplying electricity in England and Wales. About 91 per cent of the levy went to nuclear power generators, with the remaining 9 per cent going to renewable generators.

• Storehouse's sales in the first quarter, including six weeks contribution from the recently acquired Childrens World, were 8 per cent ahead of last year, chairman Ian Hay Davison told the group's annual meeting. Sales at BHS, excluding last year's turnover from the One Up chain, were up 7 per cent and Mothercare's sales, excluding Childrens World, were up 4 per cent. Gross margins have been maintained and retail profits over the quarter were "comfortably" ahead of last year, said Mr Davison who retired at the end of the meeting and was succeeded as chairman by Alan Smith, who was appointed to the board as a non-executive director and chairman-elect in January.

• Brierley Investments of New Zealand has appointed Baring Brothers International and Merrill Lynch International as advisers for a possible float this year of its 70 per cent stake in Thistle Hotels, which operates 100 hotels in the UK. In 1995, Thistle made operating profits of £89.3m from £267.5m of turnover.

• The Accounting Standards Board is to revise its proposals for a Statement of Principles rather than directly publish a standard because of heavy criticism of the original draft published several months ago. However, the record level of responses has led the board, chaired by Sir David Tweedie, to stress that the statement was never intended to be mandatory, that basic accounting concepts such as true and fair and going concern will remain part of the framework and that a system of current-cost accounting has never been on the agenda.

• Managers in smaller businesses received bigger pay rises than their counterparts in large organisations, according to a survey published by the Institute of Management and Remuneration Economics. Managers in companies with turnover of less than £40m enjoyed a 5.2 per cent rise in earnings, compared with a managerial average of 4.7 per cent in the year to January.

DfEE  
Department for Education and Employment

## CONSULTATION EXERCISE

## Maximising Potential

New options for learning after 16

Taking Forward the Recommendations for National Entry provision and National Traineeships in Sir Ron Dearing's Review of 16-19 Qualifications.

The Dearing report proposed two new options for 16 year olds: National Traineeships mainly for those aiming at NVQ Level 2; and National Entry provision for those not yet ready for further learning or who need special help in order to progress.

The Government has welcomed these proposals and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has launched a consultation exercise on the development of the new provisions.

A public Consultation Document seeks views on a range of issues related to the proposals. The closing date for comments is 30 September 1996.

Copies have been distributed widely. If you have not received one by 12th July 1996 and would like to do so, please contact Tracey Williams on 0114 2593038 or fax 0114 2593565. If you require more than five copies, please contact: Cambertown Ltd, Unit 8, Goldthorpe Industrial Estate, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S63 9BL. Tel: 01709 886888.

## Unit trust firms will have to disclose charges

NIC CICUTTI

The Personal Investment Authority, the financial watchdog, ended years of bitter argument with unit trust companies yesterday by announcing that charges on their investments must be disclosed in the same way as for life insurance and pension products.

From September, unit trust companies will have to tell savers the actual cash amount of charges levied on their funds and

whereby savers are told that a certain percentage is levied on their total funds each year



110110150

## business

## PCs add shine to Dixons' sparkle

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Shares in electrical retailer Dixons have been stellar performers since the start of 1995, beating a strong stock market by 127 per cent. They put on another 14.5 per cent to leave them at 530p yesterday after the Currys-to-PC World retail group unveiled another set of sparkling results and said underlying retail sales were 12 per cent ahead in the first ten weeks.

Excluding a £3.7m exceptional loss on Dixons' ill-judged investment in US retailer Fretter, pre-tax profits showed a 35 per cent increase to £135.2m on like-for-like sales 11 per cent higher.

Despite these results, chief executive John Clark is reluctant to attribute Dixons' success to a return of the so-called feel-good factor.

Although the year has started well, Mr Clark notes that sales in white goods (fridges, washing machines and the like) grew just 3 per cent by volume last year, while brown goods (televisions, stereos and the like) were up a mere 1 per cent.

Dixons' electrical retailing operations have undoubtedly benefited as first Rumbelows and then most of the regional electricity companies have quit the high street.

Over half of Dixons' sales come from its white goods operation, Currys, which increased turnover by 16 per cent to £1.08bn. Most of that growth came from the out-of-town Superstores format. Further advances clearly depend upon a sustained recovery in the British housing market.

But the main driver behind the impressive figures was booming sales of personal computers through the PC World chain. Buoyed by last August's launch of Microsoft's Windows 95 software package, PC World's sales soared 110 per cent to £322m, or by 30 per cent on a like-for-like basis.

Dixons has been gaining market share in the consumer PC market and now controls about 40 per cent. With retailers taking only a fifth of the total PC market in the UK, versus almost 40 per cent in the US, there's plenty of growth left for Dixons to go for.

Mr Clark promises more of the same winning formula over the next year. Half of the 350 Dixons stores still need to be refurbished, while the expansion of PC World still has a long way to go.

Another 10 PC World Superstores will be opened this year, taking the total number of outlets to 36, still well short of a UK market capable of accommodating at least 60 stores.

Analysts were busy upgrading their forecasts yesterday with profits seen reaching at least £175m this year, implying a p/e ratio in the high teens.

While the quality of earnings is hardly

enhanced by the size of its warranty income, which could represent a tenth of profits, the rating is not demanding for what is increasingly being seen in the City as a growth stock.

## Clark still has much to prove

Matthew Clark seems to have had too many plates in the air last year, at least as far as the City is concerned. While investors' attention was diverted by the £275m acquisition of Taunton Cider, which doubled the size of the group, few were watching what was happening in the drinks wholesaling business. News yesterday that profits at the Fretters offshoot, the UK's biggest drinks wholesaler, halved last year to £2.7m wrong-footed the City.

But the main problem with Clark as far as the market is concerned is its continuing devotion to an unfashionable acquisition-led strategy. The group has spent at least £470m over the last three years on brands and businesses ranging

from Gaymers, the cider maker, to wine group Grants of St James. That makes yesterday's figures hard to interpret. Reported losses of £11.3m were replaced by profits of £17.2m in the year to April, but stripping out a swathe of exceptional items and disposal losses, underlying profits rose from £21.4m to £23.3m. Including acquisitions.

Clark will have to use this year to convince investors it can successfully grow its new businesses. Thus far, rationalisation is costing more than expected. It spent £1.52m last year on sorting out Gaymer and Taunton and £9.9m on Fretters. Cost savings in the cider business should accelerate from £9m last year to £13m in 1996-97, but Clark also needs to show that it can build brands.

The distractions of the bid meant that Clark lost market share in cider and it remains to be seen whether its promotion-led marketing strategy can hold its own against bigger rivals Bulmers. Meanwhile, doubts will remain about Fretters.

Clark has seen discounts on beer narrow sharply as the big brewers punish the independents who are encroaching on their traditional distribution business. In

two biggest customers alone cost £3.35m last year. Cost savings will offset most of that in the current year and a wholesale clear-out of Fretters' management should sharpen its approach.

Long term, Clark is well positioned in high growth areas of the drinks market, but it still has something to prove. Profits of £71m this year would put the shares down 17p to 743p, on a forward multiple of 14. Hold.

## Stanley weathers the Lottery storm

Gaming group Stanley Leisure has been hammered by the National Lottery, a hot summer, a cold winter and the advent of Sunday race meetings. Pre-tax profits slumped from £17m to £14.8m in the year to April; but there are grounds for hope that the worst is over.

The succession of problems which hit the racing division last year are not likely to be repeated. Margins, down as much as two percentage points at times last summer, have recovered some of the ground lost during the hot weather, which reduced both the size of the fields and interest in race meetings. Sales of scratch cards, which had a big impact on the smaller punter, have dropped to less than 40 per cent of their level at their March 1995 launch. All being well, there should also be no repetition of the £750,000 hit as a result of the loss of a week's racing to bad weather after Christmas.

The figures this year will also be boosted by acquisitions. Stanley added 45 shops in the period which chipped in a maiden £600,000 to these figures; but the real booster will be the 74 added by the £14.7m takeover of Gus Carter in June.

Boosted by the addition of two Scottish operations, casinos chipped in £10.5m to operating profits, up from £9.8m. However, underlying growth remains sluggish; although attendances are up in the first part of the current year, margins are down.

Factoring in a recovery on the betting side, profits of £21m this year would put the shares, up 2p to 502p, on a forward price/earnings ratio of 20.

As with all the gaming groups, the market is factoring in big benefits from the current round of deregulation. Allowing slot machines in betting shops and more in casinos will help this year, but the big kick will come if proposals to raise numbers to two per gaming table are implemented. High enough even so.

## Bankers go in to bat against the professionals

## CITY DIARY

JOHN WILCOCK

Victor Blank's annual cricket match at his Oxfordshire retreat this weekend in aid of the Wellbeing charity for women and babies promises some intriguing confrontations. For the last seven years retired top-class cricketers have been pitched against celebs and businessmen.

This year, for instance, how will Mr Blank, chairman of merchant bank Charterhouse, fare against the bowling of Phil Edmonds? Will Nigel Wray, chairman of Burford Holdings, get over his hamstring problems in time to bowl against Clive Lloyd and David Gower? Whatever, the game's the thing. Sir David Frost and Mr Blank will

select their teams from the gathered throng, though I must say I would back Sunil Gavaskar against Lord Harris, chairman of Carpetright, or WPP's Martin Sorrell, anytime. Rory Bremerton is also on hand, so the commentary should be good.

Mr Keeler does make his appearance, Westminster and its adviser Barings, led by Anthony McGrath, are in for a bumpy ride.

A Manchester law firm has set up an office in a hospital but no jokers about ambulance-chasing, please. Donnells of Manchester has been invited by the NHS trust board at Salford's Hope Hospital to set up business there on the specific condition that the law firm will not accept cases against the hospital.

Laws firms are now targeting NHS trusts as new areas for expansion, and would like to see themselves as a sort of City EGM today. Wall Street is rocking with gossip following allegations that dozens of young brokers are paying others to take their licensing exams. The National Association of Securities Dealers says that some brokers pay as much as \$2,500 to others to sit the exam on their behalf.

"We're no to a startling number of people," Martin Kupperberg, the New York district director of the NASD, concedes. Already prospective brokers sitting the tests are being asked to give their fingerprints and from September, all exam坐ments will be recorded on videotape.



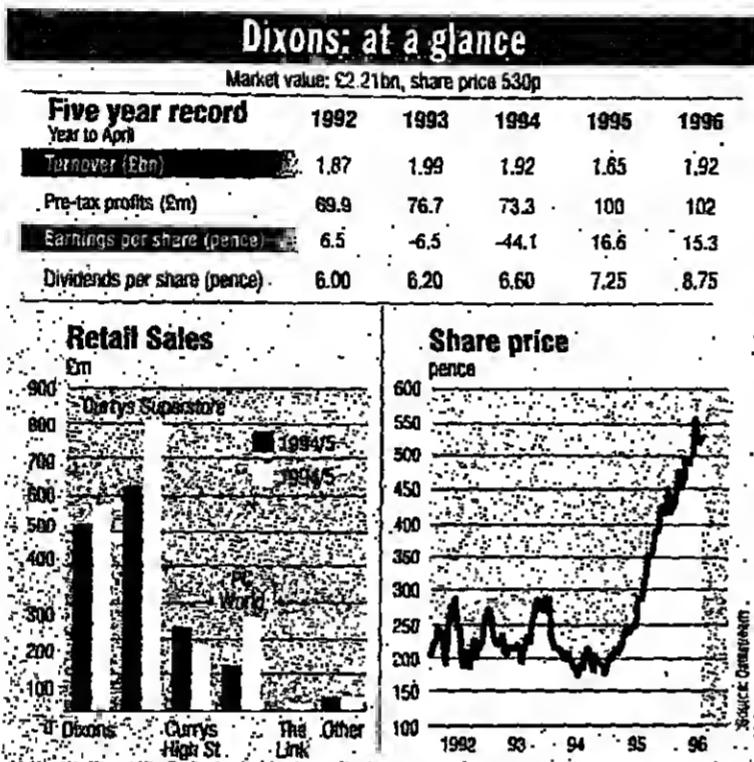
To face the business bowlers: David Gower

izens' Advice Bureau for staff and patients. Let's hope so. According to Chambers & Partners' Directory of the Legal Profession 1995-96, Donnells is "best known for accident and uninsured loss litigation".

Amschel Rothschild's unlikely death at the age of 41 raises questions about the future of NM Rothschild, the family merchant bank led by Sir Evelyn de Rothschild. According to City observers, the bank itself will be unaffected, since Amschel's side of the family did not own equity in the bank, but Rothschild Asset Management, of which he was chairman, now needs a new leader.

Likely candidates would appear to include two non-executive directors of RAM, Sir Carl Mossmann, chairman of Rothschild International Asset Management, and Sir Hugh Bidwell, former Lord Mayor of London and a non-executive director of RAM.

Amschel Rothschild was hard at work pulling in the various global strands of RAM to be centred on Paris when he died on Monday night. The bank itself is not commenting.



## Shell in \$1.5bn Exxon link-up

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Shell yesterday announced a link-up with Exxon to create one of the world's largest oil additives businesses with revenues of around \$1.5bn (£970m). The two giant oil groups will command nearly a quarter of the market for additives, put at over \$6bn in 1995.

Hopes that the announcement heralded a move to unlock shareholder value by demerging the chemicals division sent Shell's shares up 18.5p to one stage in morning trading. However, the shares ended just 5.5p

up at 943p as disenchantment set in once analysts scrutinised the deal. John Toalster of brokers Société Générale Strauss Turbush said: "It's a bit of a storm in a tea cup... It represents around 5 per cent of turnover, but it is not going to be earth shattering as far as Shell is concerned."

Additives are used in petrol and lubricants to make engines run more smoothly and more cleanly. Shell said the joint venture would combine the capabilities of each partner and provide "significant" enhancements to its world-wide petroleum additives business. It is due to

start operating next year, assuming it receives regulatory clearance.

The Exxon business employs 1,600 people in 13 countries, ranging from the Americas and continental Europe to the Middle and Far East, while Shell has 400, although that excludes workers at manufacturing sites in the UK, France, Belgium and the US. A spokesman for Shell said many of the factories were joint operations which could not be separated. He could give no commitment on whether or not there would be redundancies as a result.

The 30p drop in its share price to 360p completed a miserable year for Domino, which is best known for making machines that squirt sell-by dates on food products.

The company has been plagued by a series of profit

warnings and downgrades after it emerged last year that dad ink was congealing in its printers and clogging the jets.

Domino yesterday highlighted the continued weakness of capital equipment spending in the US, especially in sales of high-value printers into the commercial printing market.

It also reported a drop in pre-tax profits for the six months to April to \$4m from \$4.7m on sales 3 per cent higher at \$51.6m. Earnings per share fell by a quarter to 8.63p though the dividend was increased by 8 per cent to 4p.

## Slump in profits knocks Domino Printing shares

PATRICK TOOHER

Shares in Domino Printing Sciences hit a five-year low yesterday as the Cambridge-based ink jet printer maker reported lower profits and warned of continuing trading problems in the US.

The 30p drop in its share price to 360p completed a miserable year for Domino, which is best known for making machines that squirt sell-by dates on food products.

The company has been plagued by a series of profit

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Master Telecommunications (F)	12.5m (11.8m)	8.2m (12.5p)	5.8p (4.8p)	
PNV Resources (D)	7.8m (7.9m)	1.37m (1.33m)	8.4p (3.5p)	2p (1.7p)
Domino Printing (D)	51.8m (50.2m)	4.05m (4.23m)	8.65p (11.54p)	4.0p (2.7p)
El Group (F)	78.8m (61.7m)	3.78m (3.26m)	8.2p (3.4p)	4.1p (3.0p)
Matthew Clark (F)	45.1m (29.6m)	17.2m (11.3m)	18.4p (29.7p)	24p (21p)
Stanley Leisure (F)	31.8m (29.2m)	14.8m (17.0m)	18.5p (21.2p)	6.65p (6.15p)
Saltex (F)	48.8m (47.8m)	8.51m (6.13m)	27.8p (25.13p)	10p (-)
Barpet (F)	76.2m (65.8m)	16.3m (14.0m)	22.8p (14.4p)	11p (10.3p)
Argent (F)	30.8m (28.0m)	7.58m (7.55m)	3.78p (3.29p)	1.25 (1.16p)
Europac (F)	14.7m (10.4m)	5.2m (4.31m)	10.5p (10.3p)	3.75p (3.75p)
Parcels (F)	10.8m (8.93m)	7.9m (7.1m)	22.6p (20.52p)	1.8p (-)
Marie Mere (F)	43.6m (38.5m)	5.2m (4.4m)	29.15p (28.4p)	10p (9.5p)
Marie Ashby (F)	36.3m (32.7m)	3.08m (2.85m)	19.8p (18.2p)	7.50p (-)
MPF (F)	17.9m (17.7m)	6.5m (5.2m)	5.8p (5.2p)	1.25p (1.15p)
Winton Lloyd (F)	100m (84.4m)	9.68m (8.31m)	10.4p (9.8p)	7p (7p)
Universal Software (F)	48.1m (40.4m)	3.86m (3.28m)	8.56p (8.53p)	5.07p (-)
• Profit (D) - Market				

## WIN A FERRARI CONVERTIBLE FOR A MONTH WITH THE INDEPENDENT



# When proven economic theory falls flat on its face

Does the fact that taking Prozac can make somebody more inclined to impulse buy when they are out shopping invalidate economic theory?

It is a serious question. The foundation stone of economics is the assumption that individuals maximise their expected utility – that is, the benefit they expect to gain from their choices on work, saving and spending. Aggregating the choices of all the individuals in the economy delivers the familiar results of economics, such as lower prices, causing demand to increase.

However, the results depend on people's preferences having certain key characteristics, which include consistency. For instance, if I like tuna sandwiches better than chicken, and chicken better than cheese, then I must prefer tuna to cheese. In addition, people are assumed to think more is better, but with diminishing marginal returns: the tenth tuna sandwich is less appealing than the first. Given a consistent set of preferences, economic choices are predictable.

Experiments dating back to a study by the French Nobel laureate Maurice Allais in 1953 suggest that, alas, actual people do not behave like rational economic beings. The basic theory of consumer choice is systematically violated by how people behave in experimental situations. In fact, experiments over the years have shown that economics students are the only group of people ever to behave as they are supposed to in economic theory.

Some recent experiments directed by Professor Robert Sugden at the University of East Anglia shed new light on the underlying patterns of consumer behaviour. Volunteers



## ECONOMIC VIEW

DIANE COYLE

were given either cash or cash and a voucher for a main course, or a dessert, or both, at the local pizza restaurant. They were then asked questions about how much they would be willing to pay for a main course or a dessert voucher, and how much they would be willing to sell their vouchers for.

According to economic theory, the prices subjects were willing to pay for the vouchers separately ought to add up to the price they would pay for both. Equally, the price which they

would accept for both should equal the sum of the amounts accepted for the two types of voucher separately.

However, testing this by comparing the implicit value placed on a dessert voucher – calculated as willingness to pay for both vouchers less willingness to pay for a main course voucher – showed it to be consistently lower than the actual willingness to pay for the main course voucher in the experiment.

The punch-line is obvious. The sum of the parts added up to more than the whole. This is parallel to survey results which show that the sum of the amounts people claim they would like to see spent on separately cleaning up several beaches exceeds

the amount they would be willing to see spent on cleaning all the beaches at once. They might think it was worth spending several millions of pounds on cleaning the oil from the Pembrokeshire coast after the grounding of the tanker *Sea Empress* earlier this year but would not name a figure 10 times higher for cleaning up 10 beaches simultaneously.

Similarly, the amount people say would compensate them for the loss of clean air or clean beaches is far greater than the amount they would

be willing to contribute to cleaning the atmosphere through higher taxes. This result also had its parallel in the pizza experiment, where compensation required for giving up vouchers exceeded willingness to pay for them.

This phenomenon means there is a problem in various areas of public policy, not just the environment.

Take the question of compensation for injuries, for example. Two researchers at Newcastle University, Michael Jones-Lee and Graham Llorens, recently reported that surveys showed the amounts of money people said they were willing to pay to reduce the risk of road accidents was extremely sensitive to the size of

the initial sum suggested to them. Yet such "contingent value" surveys are widely used for the cost-benefit analysis of spending on safety or environmental improvements.

Further results indicate that these

inconsistencies in people's responses are not mistakes. Subjects remain happy with their original answers even when the inconsistencies are pointed out to them. What's more, in experiments where there definitely is a right answer – when the same prize is available with a greater probability in one case than the other – the subjects very rarely get the answer wrong. They are remarkably astute at working out the odds and choosing the option that will deliver the highest expected reward.

According to Professor Sugden, experimental evidence clearly suggests that consumer preferences are conditional on a reference point – the initial endowment of cash and vouchers in the pizza experiment. Given that starting point, subjects' preferences were consistent. Basic consumer choice theory needs to be amended to take account of reference points, he suggests.

This is an argument that appeals

to common sense. However, the notion of the rational economic person has its defenders. One is Alvin Roth, Professor of economics at the University of Pittsburgh, whose work in experimental economics is reported on his Internet page.

Professor Roth argues that the economic theory of consumer choice is a good approximation to the world most of the time. He defends this by pointing out that critics oppose the notion of the more-or-less rational economic man with psychological man. The experimental model sees people's choices as the result of



Clean-up conundrum: One polluted beach caused by an oil tanker disaster, such as that of the 'Sea Empress' (above), is worth millions to rectify but 10 are not worth 10 times as much

mental processes which differ in different contexts, rather than a set of consistent preferences.

However, the idea of psychological man is only an approximation to the world, too. For neuro-biologists see behaviour as the result of biochemical changes in the brain. Different levels of chemicals – whether caused by a deficiency of chocolate, a sunny start to the day, or even taking Prozac – will lead to different decisions (more shopping in each case). The psychological metaphor is useful to marketing and advertising.

"What economists think of as the realm to which their theory applies might turn out to be very small if you define the area of the subject to fit the theory," he said.

This does not convince Professor Sugden. Many people will continue to buy Coca-Cola, even when they

have preferred Pepsi in blind tastings.

He goes on to argue that experi-

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Starting		Dollar	D-Mark	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot
US	15935	4.2	2.0	1000
Canada	21262	7.3	5.07	13657
Germany	23683	48.1	140.80	15246
France	80761	132.13	365.34	7365
Italy	23841	48.3	142.65	5347
Japan	17107	75.70	225.28	1013
ECU	12933	15.11	45.40	12425
Belgium	48794	12.7	32.25	3140
Denmark	59262	15.95	45.25	20802
Netherlands	23880	15.95	45.25	17400
Iceland	10949	7.3	29.47	5202
Norway	12540	10.00	30.00	52006
Spain	10255	21.31	69.95	12826
Sweden	10356	0.4	1.9	56688
UK	16216	54.45	165.22	12526
Australia*	24457	20.31	67.47	12531
Hong Kong	12023	101.61	224.70	77393
Malaysia	38702	0.9	0.0	24933
New Zealand*	22567	43.57	133.96	14520
Saudi Arab	50264	0.0	0.0	32506
Singapore	21958	0.0	0.0	14355

Yields calculated on local basis

Forward rates quoted high to low at a discount: \*Denotes rates quoted as reciprocal.

For the latest foreign exchange rates, call 0891 233 2003.

Calls cost 30p per minute (cheap rate) 40p other times.

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15588	0.9897	Nigeria	125702	80900
Austria	165681	10.257	Oran	0.9892	0.3850
Brazil	15625	10056	Pakistan	54295	36348
Chile	129216	8.2761	Philippines	40246	26220
Egypt	52865	3.0451	Portugal	241503	158750
Finland	7242	4.6803	Qatar	5551	3642
Greece	32787	239.50	Russia	795456	43335
India	847592	55200	South Africa	67334	42100
Kuwait	0.4661	0.0000	Taiwan	42848	27800
Malta	57071	0.0	Tunisia	57071	36730
New Zealand*	22567	43.57	UAE	57071	36730
Saudi Arab	50264	0.0	Uganda	57071	36730
Singapore	21958	0.0	Yemen	57071	36730

Forward rates quoted high to low at a discount: \*Denotes rates quoted as reciprocal.

For the latest foreign exchange rates, call 0891 233 2003.

Calls cost 30p per minute (cheap rate) 40p other times.

## Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	5.75%	Discount	8.75%
France	4.50%	Prime	5.00%
Italy	3.55%	Fed Funds	5.25%
Netherlands	2.80%	Discount	4.25%
UK	2.80%	Discount	4.25%
Australia*	2.80%	Discount	4.25%

Yields calculated on local basis

Source: London Interbank Offered Rate

Interest rates quoted as reciprocal.

For the latest interest rates, call 0891 233 2003.

Calls cost 30p per minute (cheap rate) 40p other times.

Source: London Interbank Offered Rate

Interest rates quoted as reciprocal.

For the latest interest rates, call 0891 233 2003.

Calls cost 30p per minute (cheap rate) 40p other times.

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Interest rates quoted as reciprocal.

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Interest rates quoted as reciprocal.

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Interest rates quoted as reciprocal.

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Calls cost 30p per minute (cheap rate) 40p other times.

Source: London Interbank Offered Rate



## sport

**MOTOR RACING:** Proven driving and engineering skills have not added up to a force in Formula One. **Derick Allsop** considers why

## Benetton's battle to restore power

**I** life after Michael Schumacher has been a chastening experience for Benetton-Renault, it has been an unrelenting ordeal for their current drivers, Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger.

Two of the more talented and experienced men in Formula One, they have unwittingly enhanced Schumacher's reputation by failing to emulate the performances which made the German world champion for the previous two seasons and brought the team the constructors' title last autumn.

Alesi and Berger made way for Schumacher at Ferrari and both harboured the belief they might at last be heading in the direction of the championship. Instead they struggled and were hounded by stories of discontent within the team. There have been rumours Berger would retire, but Alesi would be replaced.

Flavio Briatore, Benetton's plenipotentiary leader, insists the team needs stability and continuity rather than further change, and that his drivers will serve their two-year contracts.

The drivers, for their part, contend they are coming to terms with a different environment and car, and Alesi, at least, has enjoyed better fortune of late. But the Benetton no longer challenges the Williams and the prospect of being outclassed again in Sunday's British Grand Prix at Silverstone compounds the dismay in the ranks of the Cotswolds-based team.

Alesi can offer little realis-

tic hope of success this weekend, but he does maintain the future holds out more promise.

"I have started to feel more comfortable in the team and to reach my high level again. I now understand much better the way they work, what they want and what they need," the 32-year-old Frenchman said. "After five years at Ferrari, it is very difficult to come to another

**Benetton's battle to restore power**

**Argentine** (1st): Michael Schumacher, 1 min 57.059; 2nd: Gerhard Berger, 1 min 57.062; 3rd: Jean Alesi, 1 min 57.062; 4th: Eddie Irvine, 1 min 57.063; 5th: Damon Hill, 1 min 57.064; 6th: Mika Salo, 1 min 57.065; 7th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.066; 8th: David Coulthard, 1 min 57.067; 9th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.068; 10th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.069; 11th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.070; 12th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.071; 13th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.072; 14th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.073; 15th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.074; 16th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.075; 17th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.076; 18th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.077; 19th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.078; 20th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.079; 21st: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.080; 22nd: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.081; 23rd: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.082; 24th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.083; 25th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.084; 26th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.085; 27th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.086; 28th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.087; 29th: Mika Häkkinen, 1 min 57.088; 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# Montgomerie on the right track

## Golf

ANDY FARRELL  
reports from Carnoustie

Without the aid of electronic enhancement you would not have heard Colin Montgomerie at all. The more he was drowned out by the crashing canvas of the press centre, the bigger his smile became. "The breeze is picking up," he said. "The scores will rise. I'm glad I took advantage."

Conditions were not as easy as when Montgomerie broke the course record here with a 64 in the opening round of last year's Scottish Open, giving his two-under 70 yesterday equal value in his opinion. "It was important not to drop a shot and that fact makes it as good a round as last year's," Montgomerie said. It put him at the top of the leaderboard alongside Ian Woosnam.

After last week, when he beat amateur photographers but went on to win the Irish Open, Montgomerie is determined to be happy in his workplace.

It was a fairway trap that

Carnoustie, which will host the Open again after a 24-year break in 1999, got full marks. "The course is in the best condition for a links I have ever witnessed. It is as good as any on the Open rota, if not the best of the lot. Nothing detrimental could be said about it. It is a true championship test."

Woosnam, who bogeyed the last two holes, could not wholly concur, voicing his usual complaint about the bunkers. "This does not seem like links sand," he said. Wayne Riley, who shot a 74 in the defence of his title, was more irritated by the people who went in the bunkers. At the last, his ball finished in a footprint in a greenside bunker and after playing out, he launched his club at the bunker face. Then the Australian launched into an attack on those players whose big person is more their partner in life than in golf, describing them as "pathetic people with pathetic caddies". "The raking was an absolute disgrace," he added.

It was a fairway trap that

caught Woosnam's three-wood tee-shot at the last. "I nearly shunked it," he said. After a year with the coach, Bill Ferguson, his driving still remains a problem. It took Ferguson 20 minutes on Tuesday evening to sort out that part of Montgomerie's game. "He told me to hit it, to make a positive pass at the ball. I was steering it."

Scores under par were a rarity and that Carl Mason shot 72 was due to dropping three shots in the last two holes. Mason, the winner two years ago at Gleneagles, hurt his back in March getting out of his car and 12 weeks ago had a slow-release epidural injection. "It is meant to last twelve weeks and I hope the problem has cured itself in that time," Mason said. "For three weeks I could not walk more than 20 yards, and I didn't play golf for five weeks, the longest spell in my life."

None of the visiting Americans finished under par, especially not amateur Tiger Woods who shot 81. The man who finished fourth as an amateur last year, Gordon Sherry, had to withdraw before his round after physiotherapy for a pulled neck muscle failed and he was unable to swing a club. "This is a horrendous thing to happen, this week of all weeks," Sherry said. He is hoping the problem will clear up in time for him to play in the Open qualifying at Formby on Sunday.

SCOTTISH OPEN (Continued from page 1) Final round: 1. Ian Woosnam (GBR) 70; 2. J. Riley (GBR) 71; 3. C. Mason (GBR) 72; 4. R. Riley (GBR) 73; 5. W. Riley (GBR) 74; 6. D. J. Russell (GBR) 75; 7. M. Montgomerie (GBR) 76; 8. C. Woosnam (GBR) 77; 9. C. Mason (GBR) 78; 10. P. Riley (GBR) 79; 11. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 80; 12. R. Riley (GBR) 81; 13. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 82; 14. C. Woosnam (GBR) 83; 15. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 84; 16. C. Woosnam (GBR) 85; 17. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 86; 18. C. Woosnam (GBR) 87; 19. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 88; 20. C. Woosnam (GBR) 89; 21. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 90; 22. C. Woosnam (GBR) 91; 23. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 92; 24. C. Woosnam (GBR) 93; 25. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 94; 26. C. Woosnam (GBR) 95; 27. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 96; 28. C. Woosnam (GBR) 97; 29. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 98; 30. C. Woosnam (GBR) 99; 31. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 100; 32. C. Woosnam (GBR) 101; 33. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 102; 34. C. Woosnam (GBR) 103; 35. C. Montgomerie (GBR) 104; 36. C. Woosnam (GBR) 105; 37. 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# SPORT

NATWEST TROPHY: Northamptonshire's ill-disciplined batting unable to cope with pace man's onslaught

## Martin bounces in for victory

MIKE CAREY  
reports from Old Trafford  
Northamptonshire 223  
Lancashire 225-9  
Lancashire win by one wicket

Northamptonshire fought with great resilience to try to overcome the twin disadvantages of losing the toss and a certain amount of ill-disciplined batting here yesterday before Lancashire squeezed home by one wicket with eight balls remaining.

Batting had long since become much more straightforward than it had been in the first half of an overcast day. Even so, Lancashire endured their share of hiccups, most of them self-induced, before their man of the match, Peter Martin, struck his first ball for the winning runs.

The toss was important. The pitch had sweated and greened up under cover against rain most of the previous day, and the only good news for Northamptonshire was that Glen Chapple's influenza presented him from sharing the new ball with Martin. Otherwise there might have been real mayhem. As it was, Martin ran in formidable and moved the ball around from a good off-stump line. He was so full of bounce that it is tempting to think the England selectors did Lancashire a huge favour by sparing him many hours of drudgery at Trent Bridge.

In seven overs he prised out four front-line batsmen. These wickets included the crucial one of Rob Bailey, who would have expected to drop anchor in these conditions, but he was bowled behind his legs by a ball that went on to hit not leg but middle stump.

By the time Northampton-

shire had digested this curio they were at their lowest ebb, 96 for seven. Not everyone had fallen to unplayable deliveries, as is often the case in these conditions, and a partnership of 122 by Tony Penberthy and John Embury in 12 overs put things in perspective as the ball moved around rather less. Penberthy's left-handedness was an undoubted factor in disrupting the bowler's line. At 41 he was also in luck when he was missed in the deep off Gary Yates, who he then bludgeoned for 18 off one over on his way to 79 from 85 balls.

Embury supported him characteristically, nudging it here, chipping it there. If needed two good yorkers to dig them out, but at least Northamptonshire knew they had something to bowl at, albeit on a pitch that was changing colour all the time.

Not even the otherwise accurate Curly Ambrose could pose the problems Martin had set, and nothing much had happened to encourage Northamptonshire when Michael Atherton and Jason Gallian perished in successive overs after tea when they were pacing things nicely. Lancashire never again looked quite so composed.

Northamptonshire were able to hold their breath, not to mention their catches. Though Lancashire needed 47 from 14 overs with five wickets left, they contrived to bat as though they had never been in that situation before, and were hugely indebted to the capable Martin, who thus finished off what his bowling and the spin of the coin had started.

More reports, Scoreboard, page 26

Ronnie Irani strikes out on his way to a total of 124 which helped Essex to a 67-run victory over Durham yesterday

### Round-up

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took control after Durham had removed Graham Gooch, Paul Grayson and Darren Robinson by the 12th over with only 23 on the board. They shared in a stand of 121 in 18 overs, a county record for the fifth-wicket, and then Irani and Robert Rollins, who hit an unbeaten 54, piled up 105 in 12 overs, a county best for the sixth-wicket.

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Even if Hick earns a reprieve against Pakistan, Smith could still come into the reckoning should Nasser Hussain fail to recover from his broken finger. He made a shakily start and survived one difficult chance when on six, to wicket-keeper Steve Rhodes off Stuart Lampitt.

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## Durham fall to power of Irani and Law

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